

THE CHRISTIANS

Great Interest :

Or a short 1037. L. 15

TREATISE, Divided into two Parts :

The First whereof containeth,

The Tryal of a Saving Interest in Christ.

The Second, pointeth forth plainly,

The Way [How] to Attain it :

Wherein somewhat is likewise spoken to the
manner of Express Covenanting with God.

By W. GUTHRIE, Minister of the Gospel in
SCOTLAND.

2. Pet. 1. 10. *wherefore the rather, Brethren, give diligence to make your Calling and Election sure, &c.*
 2. Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves, whether ye be in the Faith, prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates ?*
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The Seventh Impression : Wherein the Errata's of the former Impressions are amended, and several words, which founded hard in the *English*, rendred more clear and intelligible.

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THE
Stationer
TO THE
READER.

The Epistle Commendatory from a Christian Friend, giving an account of his thoughts upon perusal of This Book.

Christian Friend.

I Have sent you by the Bearer, this Book, which by Providence came to my hand, and a Blessed Providence indeed it was to me; for I hope the same mercy that brought it to my hand, hath brought the savour of it to my heart.

Upon perusal of it, I find such a blessed and happy conjunction, betwixt the Gifts and the Graces of the Spirit, such a holy and humble Condescension, to my plain capacity, such a serious handling of serious truths, that the language of my heart, upon perusal of it, was somewhat like that of the wo-

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man of Canaan, Joh. 4. 29. *Come see one that hath told me all that ever I did, or rather, all that God hath done in me, and for me.* He that hath waded much in the waters of soul-trouble, may here behold a lively description of the *spirit of bondage* in all its *Terrours* and *Troubles* : And he who is got out of these, and is *sunning his soul* in the *light of Gods Countenance*, may here behold the *light side of the Cloud* ; I mean the *Spirit of Adoption*, in all its beautiful colours.

The former part of this Book sets forth the soul in a storm, when the Law comes thundering to the Conscience ; the latter leads it into a *Calm of sweet peace and serenity*. When the Spirit of God comes to a troubled soul, as the Son of God once came to the troubled Sea, with *A peace, be still*, Mat. 4. 29 . But if it should not be thus, the Believer is here directed to be *willing to want what God is not willing to give*, and to know, *he is wise to give when he will, what he will, and how he will*, I find now that *peace is sown for the Righteous*, Psal. 97. 11. but all do not reap the crop till they come into *Emmanuel's land*, Isa. 8. 8. there our joy, as well as our light, shall be clear, and our love perfect.

And if there be any more concerned in this Piece than others, (though it deals forth its bread to all) it's *young Men* and *young Converts* ; the latter may here behold, as in a Map or Mirror, the several Providences, and various work-
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ings of the blessed Spirit, that have all concurred in the bringing them home to God; and may take notice of all the inducements and remora's they met with in the way; That as *Moses* was to write a *History of the Children of Israel passing through the Wilderness*, Numb. 33. 2. so doth this Book, with a holy kind of Elegancy, describe the *Spirits* leading the soul out of its bewildered estate, into the *Spiritual Canaan*, never leaving it, till it comes to the *Mountain of Spices*, Cant. 8. 14. out of Satans gun-shot, where his habitation shall be a *Munition of Rocks*, Isa. 33. 16. neither is there one path omitted, so far as I could ever read or gather from my own or others experience; So that it may not be unfitly termed, *A Spiritual day-Book of all the passages between the Spirit of God, and the soul in its regeneration work*; Which is no loss profitable than delightful for the believer to be reading over the Records of Gods love manifested in the Gospel; What care and cost he took with him, to recover him out of the Gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity: For tryal brings truth to light, and those things which through many Clouds intercepting, may have lost their remembrance in the soul, are here clearly discovered, that they have been, although for the present the believer cries out, *How is the Gold become dim? How is the fine gold changed?* And the looking over past experience, brings a renewed favour, and spiritual relish of those

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things upon the heart to them, *who have thus tasted that the Lord is good*, at least supports the Soul under the want of sensible feeling : whilst it calls to *remembrance the days of old, the years of Gods right hand* : But I have done, and yet methinks I can never write enough of the excellency and utility of this piece ; The Lord make it so profitable to others, as it hath been to me. To his blessing, I leave both you and it, and remain,

Your true Christian Friend,

G. B.

TO THE
READER.

Christian Reader.

WHile the generality of Men, especially in these days, by their eager pursuit after low and base interests, have proclaimed as upon the house tops, how much they have forgotten to make choice of that better part, which (if chosen) should never be taken from them ; I have made an Essay, such as it is, in the following Treatise, to take thee off from this unprofitable, though painful pursuit, by proposing the chiefest of interests, even the Christians Great Interest, to be seriously pondered, and constantly pursued by thee : Thou mayest think it strange, to see any in Print from my Pen ; (as indeed it is a surprize to my self) But necessity hath made me for this once to offer so much violence to my own inclination, in regard that some, without my knowledge, have lately published some imperfect Notes of a few of my Sermons, most confusedly together, prefixing withal this vain Title (as dispealing to my self, as the publishing of the thing) A Clear Attractive Warming-Beam, &c.

Upon

To the Reader.

Upon this occasion I was prevailed with to publish this late Piece, wherein I have purposely used a most homely and plain stile, lest other wayes, (though when I have stretched my self to the utmost I am below the Judicious and more Understanding) I should be above the reach of the Rude and Ignorant, whose advantage I have mainly, if not only consulted: I have likewise studied brevity in every thing, so far as I conceived it to be consistent with plainness and perspicuity; knowing that the persons to whom I address my self herein, have neither much money to spend upon Books, nor much time to spare upon Reading. If thou be a Rigid Critick, I know thou mayest meet with several things to carp at, yet assure thy self, that I had no design to offend thee, neither will thy simple approbation satisfy me; It's thy edification I intend, together with the incitement of some others, more expert, and experienced in this Excellent Subject, to handle the same at greater length, which I have more briefly hinted at, who am,

Thy Servant in the Word

of the Gospel,

W. Gutbery.

The Tryal of a Saving Interest in CHRIST.

SINCE there be so many people living under the Ordinances, pretending without ground to a special interest in Christ, and to his favour and salvation, as is clear, *Mat. 7. 22, 23. & 25. 11, 12. Luke. 13. 24.* And since many who have good ground of claim to Christ, are not established in the confidence of his favour, but remain in the dark, without comfort, hesitating concerning the reality of godliness in themselves, and speaking a little to the commendation of Religion to others, especially in the time of their straits, I shall speak a little to two things of greatest concernment. The one is, *How a person shall know if he hath a true and special interest in Christ, and whether he doth lay just claim to Gods favour and salvation?* The other is, *In case a person fall short in the foresaid tryal, what course he shall take for making sure Gods friendship and salvation to himself?*

Quest. 1. How shall a man know if he hath a true and special interest in Christ, and whether he hath or may lay claim justly to Gods favour and salvation?

Answer. Before we speak directly to the Question, I shall premise some things to make way for the Answer.

As First, *That a mans interest in Christ, or gracious state, may be known, and that with more certainty than*
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people

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people do conjecture; yea, and the knowledg of it may be more easily attained unto than many do imagine: For not only hath the Lord commanded men to know their interest in him, as a thing attainable, 2 Cor. 13. 5. 2 Pet. 1. 10. But many of the Saints have attained unto the clear perswasion of their interest in Christ, and in God, as their own God; How often do they call him their God and their portion; and how perswaded is *Paul*, that nothing can separate him from the love of God? Rom. 8. 38, 39. Therefore the knowledg of a mans gracious state is attainable: and this knowledge of it, which may be attained, is no fancy and bare conceit, but it is most sure: Doubtless thou art our Father, saith the Prophet in name of the Church, Isa. 23. 16. It is clear thus; 1. That can be no fancy, but a very sure knowledg, which doth yeild to a rational man comfort in most real straits: But so doth this, 1 Sam. 30. 6. when the people spake of stoning *David*, he encouraged himself in the Lord his God, Psal. 3. 6. he saith there, *he will not be afraid of ten thousand that rise against him.* Compare these words with ver. 3. of that Psalm, Psal. 27. 1, 3. *Although an host encamp against him, he is confident in this.* 2. That is a sure knowledg of a thing, which maketh a wise Merchant sell all he hath that he may keep it sure, that maketh a man forgo children, lands, life, and suffer the spoiling of all joyfully: But so doth this Mat. 13. 44. Mar. 13. 28, 29 Heb. 10. 34. Rom. 5. Act. 5. 41. (13.) That must be a sure and certain knowledg, and no fancy, whereupon a man voluntarily and freely doth adventure his soul, when he is stepping into eternity with this word in his mouth, *This is all my desire.* But such a knowledge is 2 Sam. 25. 5. And again, Not only may a godly man come to the sure knowledge of his gracious state, but it is more easily attainable than many do apprehend: for (supposing what shall be afterwards proved, that

that a man may know the gracious work of Gods Spirit in himself) if he will but argue rationally from thence he shall be forced to conclude his interest in Christ unless he deny clear Scripture truths. I shall only make use of one here, because we are to speak more directly to this afterwards. A godly man may argue thus : whosoever receive Christ, are justly reputed the Children of God, *John 1. 12.* But I have received Christ all the wayes which the Word there can import : for, I am well pleased with the device, or way of salvation by Christ, I agree to the terms ; I welcom the offer of Christ in all his offices, as a King to rule over me, as a Priest to offer and intercede for me, as a Prophet to teach me ; I lay out my heart for Him and towards Him, resting on Him, as I am able ; what else can be meant by the word *receiving* ? Therefore may I say and conclude plainly and warrantably, I am justly to reckon my self Gods child according to the aforelaid Scripture, which cannot fail.

The second thing to be premised is, *That a man be savingly in Covenant with God, is a matter of highest importance ;* it is his life, *Deut. 32. 47.* and yet very few have or seek after a saving interest in the Covenant : and many foolishly think they have such a thing without any solid ground, *Mat. 7. 14.* few find or walk in the narrow way. This should alarm people to be serious about the matter, since it is of so great consequence to be in Christ, and since there be but few that may lay just claim to him, and yet many do foolishly fancy an interest in him, who are deceived by a false confidence, as the foolish Virgins do, *Mat. 25.*

The third thing to be premised, is, *Men must resolve to be determined by Scripture, in this matter of their interest in Christ.* The Spirit speaking in the Scripture, is judge of all Controversies (*Isa. 8. 20.* *To the law and the Prophets, and it speak not according to these, there is no truth in*

it) and of this also, whether a man be savingly in Covenant with God, or not. Therefore do not mock God whilst you seem to search after such a thing. If we prove from Scripture (which is the uncontroverted rule) that you are gracious, and have stricken Covenant savingly with God, then resolve to grant so much as to acquiesce in it, and if the contrary appear, let there be a determination of the controversie ; else you do but mock the Lord, and so *your bonds shall be made strong*, Isa. 28. 22. for, *a jot of his Word cannot fail*, Mat. 5. 18. Therefore seek eye salve from Christ to judge of things, according as the word of God shall discover them to be.

The fourth thing to be premised, is, *although the matter of a mans interest in Christ be of so great importance, and the way to attain to the knowledge of it, so plainly held forth in the Scriptures, yet there be but few who reach the distinct knowledge of it ;* And that this may not discourage any person from attempting it, I shall hint some few reasons, why so few come to the clear knowledge of it, which will also prepare the way for what is to be spoken afterwards.

The first thing which doth hinder many from the knowledge of their interest in Christ, is, *their ignorance of some special principles of Religion* : as, 1. That it was free love in Gods bosome, and nothing in man, that moved him to send a Saviour to perfect the work of Redemption. Joh. 3. 16. *God so loved the World, that he sent, &c.* Men are still seeking some ground for that business in themselves, which leads away from suitable and high apprehensions of the first spring and rise of Gods Covenant-favour to his people, which hath no reason, cause, or motive in us, and so they cannot come to the knowledge of their interest. 2. They are ignorant how that love doth effectually discover it self to a mans heart, so as he hath ground to lay claim to it, viz. That ordinarily it doth first discover his broken state in himself because of sin and corruption defiling the

the whole man, and any thing in him that might be called a righteousness; *all these things are loss and dung*, Phil. 3. 6, 7. Secondly, It discovereth Christ as the full and satisfying treasure above all things. The man finds a treasure, for which, with joy, he selleth all, &c. *Mat. 13. 44, 46.* Thirdly, it determineth the heart, and causeth it to approach unto a living God in the ordinances, *Psal. 65. 4.* and causeth the heart to wait upon him, and him alone, *62. 5. My soul, wait thou only upon God.* Thus, having dropped in the seed of God in the heart, and formed Christ there, *Gal. 4. 19.* The heart is changed and made new in the aforesaid work, *Ezek. 36. 26.* and Gods Law is so stamped upon the heart in that change, *Jer. 31. 33.* that the whole yolk of Christ is commended to the man without exception, *Rom. 7. 12. 16.* The Law is acknowledged good, holy, just and spiritual: upon all which, from that new principle of life, there flow out acts of a new life, (*Gal. 5. 6. Faith worketh by love*, *Rom. 6. 18, 22.* and the man becometh a servant of righteousness and unto God) which doth especially appear in the spirituality of worship, (*Joh. 4. 24. Rom. 7. 6.* men then serve God in spirit, and truth, and in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter) and tenderness in all mannner of conversation; The man then exerciseth himself how to keep a conscience void of offence, &c. *Acts 24. 16.* Now, this way doth the love God discover it self unto man, and acteth on him, so as he hath ground of laying some good claim to it; so as he may justly think, that the love which sent a Saviour, had respect to such a man as hath found these things made out unto him. Surely, Ignorance of this doth hinder many from the knowledge of their interest in Christ, for if a man know not how God worketh with a person, so as he may justly lay claim to his love, which was from eternity, he will wander in the dark, and not come to the knowledge of an interest in him. 3. Many are also ignorant of this,

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That God alone is the hope of his people ; he is called *the hope of Israel*, Jer. 14. 8. Although inherent qualifications are evidences of it ; yet the staying of the heart upon him as a full blessing and satisfying portion, is faith (1 Pet. 1. 21. the faith and hope must be in God) and the only proper condition which giveth right to the saving blessings of the Covenant, Rom. 4. 5. *To him that worketh not, but believeth, faith is imputed for righteousness.* Indeed if any person take liberty here, and turn grace into wantonness, there is, without doubt, in so far a delusion ; since there is mercy with him, upon condition, that it conciliate fear to him, Psal. 130. 14. Yea, hardly can any man, who hath found the foresaid expressions of Gods love made out upon him, make a cloak of the Covenant for sinful liberty without some measure of a spiritual conflict : In this respect he that is born of God, doth not sin ; and he who doth so sin, hath not seen God, 1 Joh. 3. 6, 9. I say, God is the hope of his people, and not their own holiness. If they intend honestly, and long seriously to be like unto him, many failings should not weaken their hope and confidence : for, it is in him who changeth not, Mal. 3. 6. *And if any man sineth, he hath an Advocate,* 1 Joh. 2. 1. Now, when men place their hope in any other thing beside the Lord, it is no wonder they be kept in a staggering condition, according to the changes of the thing which they make the ground of their hope, since they give not to God the Glory due to his Name, and which he will not give unto another : compare, Psal. 2. 10. (*They who know thy Name, will put their trust in thee*) with Isa. 42. 9. *My glory will I not give to another : I am the Lord, that is my Name.* 4. Many are ignorant of the different wayes and degrees of Gods working with his people, and it doth much darken their knowledge and reflex acts of their interest in him. This ignorance doth run mainly on three heads (1.) They
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are ignorant of the different degrees and ways of that Law-work which ordinarily dealeth with men, and of the different way how the Lord bringeth home people at first to Christ. They consider not that the Jaylor is not kept an hour in bondage, *Acts 16.* Paul is kept in suspence, three days, *Acts 9.* *Zacheus* not one moment, *Luke 19.* (2.) They are ignorant of, or at least do not consider, how different the degrees of Sanctification are in the Saints, and the honourable appearances thereof before men in some, and the sad blemishing thereof in others: Some, are very blameless, and more free of gross outbreakings, adorning their profession much, as *Job*, *Job 1.* and *Zachariah*, *Luke 1.* Those are said to be perfect, walking in all the Commandements of God. Others were subject to very gross and sad evils, as *Solomon*, *Asa*, &c. (3.) They are ignorant of the different communications of Gods face, and expression of his presence. Some do walk much in the Light of Gods countenance, and are much in sensible fellowship with Him, as *David* was; others are all their days kept in bondage through fear of death, *Heb. 2. 25.* Surely the ignorance of the different ways of God's working and dealing with his people, doth very much darken the knowledge of their Interest in him, whilst they usually stint the Lord to one way of working, which he doth not keep, as we have shewed in the former examples.

The second thing which doth darken men about their interest in Christ, is, *There is one thing or other, wherein their heart in some respect, doth condemn them, as dealing deceitfully and guilefully with God.* It is not to be expected, that these can come to clearness about their interest, whose heart doth condemn them for keeping up some known transgression against the Lord; which they will not let go, neither are using the means which they know to be appointed by God for delivering them from

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it ; neither can these come to clearness, who know some positive duty commanded them in their stations, which they deceitfully shift and shun, not closing cheerfully with it, or not willing to be led into it. These are also, in some respect, condemned of their own heart, as the former sort ; and in that case it is difficult to come to a distinct knowledge of their state. *1 Job. 3. 21.* it is supposed there, that a self-condemning heart maketh void a mans confidence proportionally before God. I do not deny but that men may, on good grounds, plead an interest in Christ, in the case of prevailing iniquity, *Psal. 65. 3. Rom. 7. 23, 25.* but it is hard to be attained, if at all attainable, when the heart is dealing deceitfully, and entertaining known guile in particular : Therefore let people clear themselves of the particular which they know too well. It is the thing which doth meet them, marring their confidence and access in all their approaches unto God. See *Judg. 10. 10, 13.* The Idolatries of the people are cast up to them by the Lord, and their suit rejected thereupon. That which draweth away the heart first in the morning, and last at night ; like an Oven heated at night, and it burneth as a flaming fire in the Morning, spoken of the wicked, *Hos. 7. 6.* And taketh up their thoughts often on their bed, as it is said of some, *Psal. 36. 4.* That which doth lead away the heart in time of religious duty ordinarily, and the remembrance of which hath power to enliven and quicken the Spirits, more than the remembrance of God, so as their heart is after the heart of some detestable thing. *Ezek. 11. 21.* That which withstandeth men when they would lay hold on the Promise, as God casteth up mens sins to them who were meddling with his Covenant, *Psal. 50. 16, 17.* That is the thing which doth marr the knowledge of a gracious state, let it go, and it will be more easie to

to reach the knowledge of an interest in Christ.

The third thing which hindreth the knowledge of an interest in Christ, is *a spirit of sloth and careless negligence in many*. They complain that they know not whether they be in Christ or not ; but, as few take pains to be in him, so few take pains to try if they be in him. It is a work and business which cannot be done sleeping, 2 Cor. 13. 5. The several words used there, *viz. examine, prove, know*, say that there is a labour in it ; diligence must be used to make our calling and election sure, 2 Pet. 1. 10. it is a business above flesh and blood ; The holy anointing, which teacheth all things, must make us know the things Freely given us of God, 1 Cor. 2. 12. Shall the Lord impart a business of so great concernment and not so much as be enquired after to do it for men ? Ezek. 36. 37. Be ashamed you who spend so much time in reading Romances, in adorning your persons, in hawking, and hunting, in consulting the Law, concerning your outward state in the World, and it may be, in worse things than those : Be ashamed that you spend so little time in the search of this, whether you be an heir of Glory or not ; whether you be in the way that leadeth to Heaven, or that which will land you in darkness for ever. You who judge this below you, and unworthy of your pains, any part or minute of your time, it is like in Gods account, you have judged your selves unworthy of everlasting life, so as you have no lot with Gods people in this matter.

The fourth thing that doth darken the knowledge of interest in Christ, is, *men do not condescend upon what would satisfie them* ; but complain that God will not shew unto them what he is about to do with them ; but cannot yet say they know what would satisfie concerning his purpose : this is a sad thing. Shall we think those are serious, who have never as yet, pitched on what
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would satisfie them, nor are making earnest enquiry after what should satisfie ? If the Lord had left us in the dark in that matter, we were less inexcusable : but since the grounds of satisfaction and the true marks of interest in Christ, are so clear and frequent in Scripture, and so many things written that our joy may be full, 1 *Joh.* 1. 4. and that those who believe may know that they have eternal life, 1 *Joh.* 5. 13. and since he that believeth hath a Witness of it in himself, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. none can pretend excuse here. We may not here insist to shew what may and should satisfie concerning our interest, since we are to speak directly to it afterwards.

The fifth thing that helpeth much to keep men in the dark, concerning their interest in Christ, is, *they pitch upon some mutable grounds*, which are not so apposite proofs of the truths of an interest in Christ, as of the comfortable state of a triumphing soul sailing before the wind, and marks, which I grant are precious in themselves, and do make out an interest clearly where they are ; Yet they are such, as without them, an interest in Christ may be, and be known also in a good measure. We shall touch a few of them. 1. Some think that all who have a true interest in him are above the prevailing power of every sin. But this is contrary to that of *Psal.* 65. 3. where we find that holy man laying just claim to pardon, in the case of prevailing iniquity ; and that of *Rom.* 7. 23, 24, 25. where *Paul* thanketh God through Christ, as freed from the condemnation of the Law, even whilst a law in his *members* leads him captive unto sin. 2. Some think that all true Saints have constantly access unto God in prayer, and sensible returns of Prayer at all times. But this is contrary to the many sad exercises of God's people, complaining often, that they are not heard nor regarded of God. *Psal.* 13. 1. and 22. 1, 2. (3.)
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Interest in Christ.

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Some think, that all who have any true interest in him have God witnessing the same unto them by a high operation of that witnessing spirit of his, spoken of *Romans* 8. 16. (whereof afterwards) and so they still suspect their own interest in Christ, because of the want of this. But they do not remember that they must first believe, and give credit to that record, which God hath given to his Son, that there is life enough in him for men, *1 John* 5. 10, 11. and then look for the seal and witness of the spirit, *Eph.* 1. 13. *In whom after ye believed ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, &c.* As long as people hold fast these principles and the like, they can hardly come to the knowledge of their gracious state, (which God hath warranted people to prove and clear up to themselves) otherways than by the aforesaid things.

The fifth thing to be premised, is, The removal of some mistakes, whereunto people may readily run themselves, when we are about to prove their interest in Christ. As, 1. It is a mistake to think, that every one who is in Christ, doth know that he is in Him. For many are truly gracious, and have a good title to eternal life, who do not know so much, until it be made out afterwards, *1 John* 5. 13. These things are written to believers, that they may know they have a true title to eternal life; that is, that they may know they are believers, and so it is supposed they knew it not before. 2. It is a mistake to think, that all who come to the knowledge of their interest in Christ, do attain an equal certainty about the same: One may say, he is perswaded, nothing present or to come, can separate him from the love of God, *Rom.* 8. 38. Another cometh but this length, *I believe, help mine unbelief,* *Mar.* 9. 24. 3. It is a mistake to think, that every one who attaineth to a strong perswasion of his interest, doth always hold there; for he who to day may say of the
Lord,

Lord, *He is his refuge*, Psal. 21. 2. and *his portion*, Psal. 119. 57. will at another time say, *he is cut off*, Psal. 31. 22. and will ask, if the truth of Gods promise *doth fail for evermore*? Psal. 77. 7, 8, 9. 4. It is also a mistake to think, that every one who doth attain a good knowledge of their gracious state, can formally answer all objections made to the contrary; But yet they may hold fast the conclusion, and say, *I know whom I have believed*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. There be few grounds of Christian Religion, whereof many people are so perswaded, as that they are able to maintain them formally against all arguments brought to the contrary, and yet they may and will hold the conclusion stedfastly and justly: So it is in this case in hand. It is no less a mistake to imagine, that the vain, groundless confidence which many prophane, ignorant Atheists do maintain, is this knowledge of an interest in Christ which we plead for; Many do falsely avouch him to be their Father, *Joh. 8. 41.* and many look for Heaven, who will be beguiled with those foolish Virgins, *Mat. 25. 12.* Yet we must not think, because of this, that all knowledge of interest is a delusion and fancy, although these fools be deceived: for whilst thousands are deluded, some can say on good and solid grounds; *We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lyeth in wickedness*, 1 Joh. 5. 19.

Having premised these things, it now followeth, that we give some marks by which a man may know if he be savingly in Covenant with God, and hath a special interest in Christ, so as he may warrantably lay claim to Gods favour and salvation. We shall only pitch upon two great and principal marks, not willing to trouble people with many. And before we fall upon these, we will speak of a preparatory work of the Law, whereof the Lord doth ordinarily make use, to prepare his own way

way in mens souls. This may have its own weight, as a mark, with some persons. It is called the work of the Law, or, the work of humiliation. It hath some proportion to that spirit of bondage, *Rom. 8. 15.* and doth now under the New Testament answer unto it, and usually leadeth on to the Spirit of adoption. Only here let it be remembred, 1. That we are not to speak of this preparatory work of the Law, as a negative mark of true interest in Christ, as if none might lay claim to Gods favour, who hath not had this preparatory work in the several steps of it, as we are to speak of it; for, as we shall hear, the Lord doth not always keep that path with men. 2. The great reason why we speak of it, is, because the Lord dealeth with many (whom he doth effectually call) by some such preparatory work. And to those, who have been so dealt with, it may prove strengthening, and will confirm them in laying the more weight on the marks which follow. 3. It may help to encourage others, who are under such bondage of spirit, as a good prognostick of a gracious work to follow: for as we shall circumstance it, it will be rarely found to miscarry, and fail of a gracious issue. 4. Where God useth such a preparatory work, he doth not keep one way or measure in it, as we shall hear.

For the more distinct handling of this preparatory work, we shall shortly hint the most ordinary ways, by which the Lord leadeth people into the Covenant savingly, and draweth them unto Christ.

First, *There are some called from the Womb*, as *John* the Baptist was, *Luke 1. 41, 44.* or, in their very young years, before they can be deeply engaged actively in Satans ways, *2 Tim. 3. 15.* It cannot be supposed that those have such a preparatory work as we are to speak of. And because some persons may pretend to this way of effectual calling, we offer these marks of it,

it, whereby those who have been so called may be confirmed, (1.) Such use from their Childhood to be kept free of ordinary pollutions, wherewith Children usually are defiled; as swearing, lying, mocking of Religion, and religious persons, &c. Those whom God calleth effectually, he sanctifieth them from the time of that effectual calling: Sin cannot have dominion over them as over others, because they are under grace, *Rom. 6. 14.* (2.) Religion is, as it were, natural to them; I mean, they need not be much pressed to religious duties, even when they are but children; They willingly run that way, because there is an inward principle, of love constraining them, *2 Cor. 5. 14.* so as they yield themselves servants of righteousness, without outward constraint, *Rom. 6. 16.* (3.) Although such know not when they were first acquainted with God, yet afterwards they have such exercises of spirit befalling, as the Saints in Scripture (of whose first conversion we hear not) do speak of. They are shut out from God upon some occasion now and then, and are admitted to come nearer again, (to their apprehension.) Their heart is also further broken up by the ordinances, as is said of *Lydia*, *Act. 16. 14.* and ordinarily they do remember, when some special piece of Religion and Duty, or when some sin, of which they were not taking notice before, was discovered to them. They who can apply these things to themselves, have much to say for their effectual calling from their youth.

Secondly, *Some are brought in to Christ in a sovereign Gospel-way:* when the Lord, by some few words of love swallowing up any Law-work, quickly taketh a person prisoner at the first, as he did *Zacheus*, *Luke. 19.* and others, who upon a word spoken by Christ, did leave all and follow him; and we hear no noise of a Law-work dealing with them before they close with Christ Jesus. And because some pretend to this way of calling, we shall touch

touch some things most remarkable in that transaction with *Zachens*, for clearing and confirmation. 1. He had some desire to see Christ, and such a desire, as made him wave that which some would have judged prudence and discretion, whilst he climbeth up upon a tree that he might see him. 2. Christ spake to his heart, and that word took such hold upon him, that presently with joy he did accept of Christ's offer, and closed with Christ as Lord, whilst few of any note were following him. 3. Upon this his heart did open to the poor, although it seems, he was a covetous man before. 4. He had a due impression of his former wayes, evidencing his respect to *Moses* his Law; and this he did signifie before all the company then present, not caring to shame himself in such things as (probably) were not known to the World. 5. Upon all these things, Christ confirmeth and ratifieth the bargain by his word, recommending to him that oneness of interest, which behoved to be between him and the Saints, and the thoughts of his own lost condition, if Christ had not come and sought him, and found him: All which are clear, *Luke 19. 3, ——— 10.* We grant, the Lord calleth some so; and if any can lay claim to the special things we have now hinted, they have a good confirmation of Gods dealing with them from that Scripture; Neither are they to vex themselves because of the want of a distinct preparatory Law-work if their heart have yielded unto Christ. For, a Law work is not desirable except for this end. Therefore Christ doth offer himself directly in the Scripture, and people are invited to come to him: and although many will not come to him, who is the surety, until the spirit of bondage distress them for their debt; yet if any upon the knowledge of their lost estate, would flee and yield to Christ, none might warrantably press a Law work upon them. As for others, whom Christ perswaded by a word to follow him, whatsoever he did,

did, or howsoever he spake to them at his first meeting with them, we must rationally suppose, that then he discovered so much of their own necessity, and his own fullness and excellency to them, as made them quit all, and run after him. And if he do so to any, we crave no more, since there is room enough there for the Physitian. So that from all this, as some may be confirmed and strengthened, with whom God hath so dealt; So there is no ground nor occasion for deluded souls to flatter themselves in their condition, who remain ignorant and senseless of their own miseries and Christs all-sufficiency, and hold fast deceit.

Thirdly, *There are some brought in to Christ in a way yet more declarative of his free grace*, and this is, when he effectually calleth men at the hour of death. We find somewhat recorded of this way in that pregnant example of the Thief on the Cross; *Luk. 23. 39, 41*. Although this seems not very pertinent for the purpose in hand; yet we shall speak a little of it; that on the one hand men may be sparing to judge and pass Sentence upon either themselves or others, before the last breath. And we shall so circumstantiate it, that, on the other hand, none may dare to delay so great a business to the last hour of their life. We find these things remarkable in that business between Christ and the Thief; 1. The man falleth at odds with his former Companion. 2. He dareth not speak a wrong word of God, whose hand is on him, but justifieth him in all that is befallen him. 3. He now seeth Jesus Christ persecuted by the World, without a cause, and most injuriously. 4. He discovereth Christ to be a Lord and a King, whilst enemies seem to have him under. 5. He believeth a being of glory after death so really, that he preferreth a portion of it to the present safety of his bodily life, which he knew Christ was able to grant to him at that time, and he might have chosen that with the other Thief.

Thief. 6. Although he was much abased in himself, and humbled, that he pleaded but that Christ would remember him, yet he was nobly daring to throw himself upon the Covenant, on life and death; and he had so much faith of Christs all-sufficiency, that he judged a simple remembrance from Christ would satisfyingly do his business. 7. He acquiesced sweetly in the word which Christ spake to him, for the ground of his comfort. All which are very clear in the case of that poor dying man, and do prove a very real work of God upon his heart. As this example may encourage some to wait for good from God, who cannot as yet lay clear claim to any gracious work of his Spirit: So we beseech all, as they love their souls, not to delay their soul-businesses, hoping for such a cast of Christs hand in the end, as too many do: This being a rare miracle of mercy with the glory whereof Christ did honourably triumph over the ignominy of his cross (a parallel of which we shall hardly find in all the Scripture beside:) yea, as there be but few at all saved, *Mat. 20. 16.* and most few saved this way: So the Lord hath peremptorily threatned to laugh at the calamity, and not to hear the cry of such as mocked formerly at his reproof, and would not hear when he called to them, *Prov. 1. 24, 26.* which Scripture, although it doth not shut mercies door upon any, who at the hour of death, do sincerely judge themselves and flee unto Christ as this penitent Thief did: Yet it is certain, it implyeth that very few who sit the offer until then, are honoured with repentance, as he was, and so their cry, as not being sincere and of the right stamp, shall not be heard.

The fourth, and most ordinary way, by which many are brought in to Christ, is, by a clear and discernable work of the law and humiliation, which we ordinarily call the *spirit of bondage*, as was hinted before. We do not mean that every one whose conscience is awakened with

sin and fear of wrath, doth really close with Christ; the contrary doth appear in *Cain, Saul, Judas &c.* But that wherein there is a conviction of sin, awakening of conscience, and work of humiliation, which, as we shall circumstantiate it, doth rarely miscarry or fail of a gracious issue, but ordinarily doth resolve into the spirit of adoption, and a gracious work of Gods Spirit: and because the Lord dealeth with many sinners this way, and we find that many are much puzzled about the giving judgment of this Law-work.

This work is either more violent and sudden, or it is more sober and longer, protracted through a great length of time, and so as the steps of it are very discernable. It is more violent in some, as in the *Faylor, Paul*, and some other converts in the book of the *Acts of the Apostles*, on whom Christ did break in at an instant, and fell on them as with Fire and Sword, and led them captive terribly; And because some great legal shakings are deceitful, and turn to nothing, if not worse, we shall point at some things remarkable in these converts, spoken of before, which did prove the work of the Law on them, to have had a gracious issue and result.

1. Some word of truth or dispensation, putteth the person to a dreadful stand, with a great stir in the Soul: Some are pricked in heart, *Acts 2. 27.* Some fell on trembling, *Acts 16. 29.* and this is such a stir, that the person is brought to his wits end. *What wilt thou have me to do?* saith *Paul*, *Acts 9.* *What shall I do?* saith the *Faylor*, *Acts 16. 30.*
2. The person is content to have Salvation, and Gods friendship on any terms, as the questions do import, *What shall I do?* as if he had said, *What would I not do? What would I not forego? What would I not undergo?*
3. The person accepteth the condition offered by Christ and his Servants, as is clear in the fore-cited Scriptures.
4. The person presently becometh of one interest with the

Saints.

Saints, joyning himself with that persecuted society, putting respect on those whom he had formerly persecuted, joyning and continuing with them in the profession of Christ on all hazards. Those with whom the Lord hath so dealt have much to say for a gracious work of Gods spirit in them; and it is like many of them can date their work from such a particular time and word, or dispensation, and can give some account of what past between God and them, and of a sensible change following in them from that time forward, as *Paul* giveth a good account of the work and way of God with him afterwards, *Acts* 22.

Again, The Lord sometimes carrieth on this work more calmly, softly, and gently, protracting it so as the steps of mens exercise under it are very discernable. It would draw a great length to enlarge every step of it; we shall touch the most observable things in it.

1. The Lord layeth siege to men (who, it may be, have often refused to yield to him, offering himself in the Ordinances) and by some word Preached, Read, or born in on the mind, or by some providence leading in unto the Word, he doth also assault the house kept peaceably by the strong man, the Devil; and thus Christ, who is the stronger man, cometh upon him, *Luke* 11. 22. and by the Spirit of truth, doth fasten the Word on the man, in which Gods curse is denounced against such and such sinners, whereof the man knoweth himself guilty. The spirit convinceth the man, and bindeth it upon him, that he is the same person against whom the Word of God doth speak, because he is guilty of such sins, and from such sins the man is led on to see more until (ordinarily) he comes to see the sins of his youth, sins of omission, &c. yea, he is led on until he sees himself guilty almost of the breach of the whole Law; he seeth innumerable evils compassing him, as *David* speaketh in a fit of exercise, *Isa.* 40. 12. A man sometimes will see

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ugly sights of sin in this case, and is sharp-sighted to reckon a filthiness to every sin almost. Thus the spirit convinceth of sin, *Joh. 16. 8. 2.* The Lord shaketh a special strong hold in the garrison, a refuge of lies, to which the man betaketh himself when his sins are thus discovered to him. The poor man pretendeth to faith in Christ, whereby he thinks his burden is taken off him, as the *Pharisees* said, *Joh. 8. 41. We have one Father, even God.* They pretend to a special relation of God as a common Lord. The Spirit, of God beats the man from this, by the truth of the Scriptures, proving that he hath no true faith, and so no interest in Christ, nor any true saving grace; shewing clear differences between true grace and the counterfeit fancies which the man hath in him, and between him, and the truly Godly, as Christ laboureth to do those, *Joh. 8. 42, 44. If God were your father, ye would love me. Ye are of the Devil, for ye do the lusts of such a father. So, fear surpriseth the Hypocrite in heart, Isa 33. 14.* especially when the Lord discovereth to him conditions in many of these promises (wherein he trusted most) not easily attainable, he now seeth grace and faith another thing than once he judged them to be. We may in some respect, apply that word here, *The Spirit convinceth him of sin, because he hath not believed on the Son :* he is particularly convinced of unbelief, *Joh. 16. 9.* he seeth now a huge distance between himself and the godly, whom he thought before out-stripped him in only some unnecessary, proud, hateful preciseness; he now seeth himself deluded, and in the broad way with the perishing multitude; and so in the sight of his misery, coucheth down under his own burden, which, before this time, he thought Christ did bear for him; he now beginneth to be afraid of the Promises, because of that and such other words, *What hast thou to do to take my Covenant in thy mouth? Ec. Psal. 50 16*

3. The man becometh careful about his salvation, and
beginneth

Interest in Christ.

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beginneth to take it to heart, as the one thing necessary : he is brought to this with the Jaylor, *Act. 16. What shall I do to be saved?* His salvation becometh the leading thing with him : It was least in his thoughts before, but now it prevaieth, and other things are much mis-regarded by him, since his soul is ready to perish, *What shall it profit him to gain the whole world if he lose his soul ; Mat. 16. 26.* Some here are much puzzled with thoughts of an irrecoverable decree to their prejudice, and with the fears of uncertain death, which may attach them before they get matters put to a point ; and some are vexed with apprehensions, that they are guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is unpardonable, and so are driven a dangerous length, Satan still casting up to them many sad examples of people, who have dolefully put an end to their own exercise : but they are in the hand of one, who knoweth how to succour them that are tempted, *Heb. 2. 18.*

4. When a man is thus in hazard of miscarrying, the Lord useth a work of preventing mercy towards him ; quietly, and under-hand supporting him ; and this is by bearing upon his mind the possibility of his Salvation, leading the man to the remembrance of pregnant proofs of Gods free and rich grace, pardoning gross transgressors, such as *Manasseth*, who was a bloody idolatrous man, and had correspondence with the Devil, and yet obtained mercy, *2 Chron. 33. 12, 13.* and other Scriptures bearing offers of grace and favour indifferently to all who will yield to Christ, whatsoever they have been formerly : So as the man is brought again to this, *What shall I do to be saved?* which doth suppose, that he apprehendeth a possibility of being saved, else he would not propound the question. He applyeth that, or the like word, to himself, *It may be ye shall be hid*, *Zeph. 2. 3.* he findeth nothing excluding him from mercy now, if he have a heart for the thing. Although here it may be, the man doth

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doth not perceive that it is the Lord who upholdeth, yet afterward he can tell, that when his foot was slipping, Gods mercy held him up, as *Psal. 94. 17. 18.* the Psalmist speaketh in another case. And he will afterwards say, *When he was as a Beast, and as a fool in many respects, God held him by the hand, Psal. 73. 22, 23.*

5. After this discovery of a possibility to be saved, there is a work of *desire* quickned in the Soul; which is clear in that same expression, *What shall I do to be saved?* But sometimes this desire is not regular, whilst it goeth out thus, what shall I do that I may *work* the works of God *Joh. 6. 28.* In which case, the man formerly perplexed with fear and care about his Salvation would be at some work of his own, to extricate himself; And here he suddenly resolveth to do all that is commanded, and to forego every evil way (yet much slighting Christ Jesus) and so beginneth to take some courage to himself again establishing his own righteousness, but not submitting to the Righteousness of God, *Rom. 10. 3.* whereupon the Lord maketh a new assault on him, intending the discovery of his absolutely broken state in himself, that so room might be made for the Surety; as *Joshua* did to the people, when he found them so bold in their undertakings, *Josh. 24. 18. 19.* *You cannot serve the Lord,* saith he, *for he is a Holy God &c.* In this new assault, the Lord, 1. Bends up against the man the spirituality of the Law, the Commandment cometh with a new change in the spiritual meaning of it, *Rom. 7. 9.* *The Law came* (saith Paul) *viz.* in the spiritual meaning of it. Paul had never seen such a sight of the Law before. 2. God most holily doth loose the restraining bonds, which he had laid upon the mans corruptions, and suffereth it not only to boyl and swell within, but to threaten, to break out in all the outward members. Thus sin groweth bold, and kicketh at the law, becoming exceeding sinful, *Rom. 7. 8, 9, 13.*

3. The

3. The Lord doth discover to man, more now than ever before, the uncleanness of his righteousness, and what spots are in his best things. These things kill the mast, and he dieth in his own conceit, *Rom. 7. 9.* and dispaireth of releif in himself, if it come not from some other way.

6. After many ups and downs here, ordinarily the man resolveth some retirement, he desireth to be alone, he cannot keep company as before; like those who in a besieging City, when they see they cannot hold out, and would be glad of any good condition from the besieging enemy, they go to a council, that they may resolve somewhat. So the man here retireth, that he may speak with himself. This is like that communing with our own heart *Psal. 4. 4.* Thus God leadeth to the wilderness, that he may speak to the heart, *Hos. 2. 14.* When the person is retired, the thoughts of the heart which were scattered in former steps of exercise, do more observable throng in here. We shall reduce them into this method. (1.) The man thinks of his unhappy folly, in bearing arms against God, and here there be large thoughts of former wayes, with a blushing countenance and self-loathing, *Ezek. 36. 31.* like that of *Psal. 51. 3.* his sin is before him. (2.) Then he remembreth how fair opportunities of yeilding to God he hath basely lost; his spirit is like to faint when he remembreth that, as is said in another case, *Psal. 42. 4, 5.* (3.) He now thinks of many Christians, whom he mocked and despised in his heart, perswading himself now that they are happy, as having chosen the better part; he thinks of the condition of those who wait on Christ, as the Queen of Sheba did of *Solomons* servants: *Happy are thy servants (saith she) who stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom, 1 Kings 10. 8. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, &c. Psal. 8. 4. 4.* He wilheth to be one of the meanest who have any near relation to God, as the prodigal Son doth speak,

he would be as one of the Fathers hired servants, *Luke* 15. 17. 19. (5.) Then he calleth to mind the good report that is gone abroad of God, according to that testimony, *Jonah* 4. 2. The Prophet knew that God was a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, &c. The free and large promises and offers of grace come in here; and the glorious practices which have past upon sinners of all sorts, according to the same of God in Scripture. (5.) He thinks with himself, why hath God spared me so long, and why have I got such a sight of my sin? why hath he kept me from breaking prison at my own hand, in choosing some unhappy way of escape? Why hath he made this strange change on me? It may be it is in his heart to do me good, O that it may be so!--- Although all these thoughts be not in the preparatory work of every one, yet they are with many, and very promising where they are.

7. Upon all these Thoughts and Meditations, the man more seriously than ever before, resolveth to pray, and to make some essay with God, upon Life and Death; he concludeth, it can be no worse with him: for, if he sit still, he perisheth, as the Lepers speak, *2 Kings* 7. 3, 4. He considereth with the pinched Prodigal Son, that there is bread enough in the Fathers House, and to spare, while he perisheth for want: so he goeth to God, for he knoweth not what else to make of his condition, as the Prodigal Son doth, *Luk.* 15. 17, 18. and, it may be, here he resolveth what to speak; but readily things do vary when he is arraigned before God, as the Prodigal Son forgot some of his premediated prayers, *Luk.* 15. 18, 19, 21. And now when he cometh before God more observably than ever before, (1.) He beginneth with the Publican, *a far off*, *Luk.* 18. 13. with many through confessions and self-condemnings, whereof he is very Prodigal, as *Luk.* 15. 21. *I have sinned against Heaven,*
and

and before thee, and am no more worthy, &c. (2.) Now begin his thoughts about the hearing of his prayer, which he was not wont to question much; he now knows what those expressions of the Saints, about the hearing of their prayers, do import. (3.) It is observable in this address, that there are many broken Sentences, like that of *Psal. 6. 3.* (*But thou, O Lord, how long?*) supplied with sighs and groans, *Rom. 8. 26.* and greedy looking upward, thereby speaking more than can be express by words. (4.) There be ordinarily some interruptions, and (as it were) diversions, the man speaking sometimes to the enemy, sometimes to his own heart, sometimes to the multitude in the world, as *David* did in other cases, *Psal. 9. 6.* *Psal. 42. 5.* *Psal. 4. 2.* (5.) It is observable here, that sometimes the man will halt and be silent to hear some indistinct whispering of a joyful sound glancing on the mind, or some news in some broken word of Scripture, which, it may be, the man scarcely knoweth to be Scripture, or whether it is come from God or Satan to delude him: yet this he hath resolved, only to hear what God the Lord will speak, as upon another occasion, *Psal. 85. 8.* (6.) More distinct promises comes into the mans mind, whereupon he assaileth to lay hold, but is beaten off with objections, as in another case the Psalmist is, *Psal. 20. 3. 6.* *But thou art holy, But I am a Worm.* Now it is about the dawning of the day with the man, and Faith will stir as soon as the Lord imparteth the joyful sound, *Psal. 89. 15.* This is the substance of the Covenant, which may be shortly summed up in these words, *Christ Jesus is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.* We can speak no further of the mans exercise as a preparatory work; for, what followeth, is more than preparatory. Yet, that the exercise may appear compleat and full, we shall add here, That after all these things, the Lord (it may be after

after many answers of divers sorts) mightily conveyeth the sound of his Covenant to the heart and determineth the heart to close with it, and God now draweth him so to Christ, *Job. 6. 44.* and so shapeth out the heart for him, that the conception cannot miscarry ; for now the heart is so in breadth and length for him, as that less cannot satisfie, and more is not desired, like that of *Psal. 73. 25.* *Whom have I in Heaven but thee ? or whow have I desired on earth besides thee ?* The soul now resolveth to die, (if he command so) yet at his door, and facing to him-wards.

We have drawn this preparatory work to some length, not tying any man to such a work so circumstantiate ; only, we say, the Lord dealeth so with some ; and where he so convinceth of sin, corruption, and self emptiness, and maketh a man take salvation to heart, as the one thing necessary, and sets him on work in the use of the means, which God hath appointed for relief ; I say such a work rarely shall be found to fail of a good issue and gracious result.

Object. *Hypocrites and reprobates have great stirrings of Conscience, and deep convictions about sin, setting them on work sometimes, and I do suspect any preparatory work of the Law I ever had, to be but such as they have.*

Ans. It will be heard to give sure essential differences between the preparatory work in those in whom afterwards Christ is formed, and those legal stirrings which are sometimes in Reprobates : If there were not some gracious result of these convictions, and wakenings of conscience in the Lords people, and other marks, (of which we shall speak afterwards) it were hard to adventure upon any difference that is clear in these legal stirrings. Yet, for answer to the Objection, I shall offer some things, which rarely will be found in the stirring of reprobates, and which are ordinarily found in that Law-work which hath

hath a gracious issue. 1. The convictions of hypocrites and reprobates, are usually confined to some few very gross transgressions. *Saul grants no more but the persecuting of David, 1 Sam. 26. 21. Judas grants only the betraying of innocent blood, Mat. 27. 4.* But usually these convictions by which the Lord prepareth his own way in the soul, although they may begin at one or more gross particular transgressions; yet they rest not there, but the man is led on to see many breaches of the Law, and innumerable evils compassing him, as *David* speaketh in the sight of his sin, *Psal. 40. 12.* and withal, that universal conviction (if I may call it so) is not general, as usually we hear senseless men saying, that in all things they sin: But it is particular and condescending, as *Paul* afterwards spake of himself, he not only is the chief of sinners, but particularly, he was a blasphemers, a persecuter, *1 Tim. 1. 13.* 2. The convictions which Hypocrites have, do seldom reach their Corruption, and that body of death which breeds an averfeness from what is good, and strongly inclineth to what is evil. Ordinarily where we find Hypocrites speaking of themselves in Scripture, they speak loftily, and with some self conceit, both as to their freedom from corruption, *Job. 9. 34.* The Pharisees say to the poor man, *Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?* (as if they themselves were not as corrupt by nature as he) They speak of great sins as *Hazael* did, *2 Kings 8. 13.* *Am I a Dog that I should do this great thing?* And also in their undertakings of duty, as that man spake, *Mat. 8. 19.* *I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.* See how the people do speak, *Jer. 42. 2. to 7.* They undertake to do all that God will command them, so that they still go about in any case to establish their own righteousness, not submitting unto the righteousness of God. But I may say, that convictions and exercise about corruption, and that body of death, inclining

ning to evil, and disenableing for good, is not the least part of the work, where the Lord is preparing his own way. They use to judge themselves very wretched, because of a body of sin, and are at their wits end how to be delivered, as *Paul* speaketh when he is under the exercise of it afterwards, *Rom. 7. 19. 3.* It will ordinarily be found, that the convictions which are in hypocrites, either are not so serious, as that some other business will not put them out of head before any satisfaction be gotten, as in *Cain*, who went and built a City, and we hear no more of his Convictions, *Gen. 4.* Felix went away until a more convenient time, and we hear no more of his trembling, *Acts 24. 25.* Or, if that work become very serious, then it runneth to the other extremity and despair of relief, leaving no room for any escape. So we find *Judas* very serious in his Convictions, yet he grew desperate, and hanged himself, *Mat. 27. 4, 5.* But where the Lord prepareth his own way, the work is both so serious, as the person cannot be put off it, (until he find some satisfaction) and yet under that very seriousness he lyeth open for relief: both which are clear in the *Gaolers* words, *What shall I do to be saved?* *Acts 16. 30.* This serious enquiry after Relief, is a very observable thing in the preparatory work which leadeth on to Christ; yet we desire none to lay too much weight on these things, since God hath allowed clearer differences between the precious and the vile.

Object. I still fear, I have not had so through a sight of my sin and misery, as the Lord giveth to many whom he effectually calleth, especially to great Transgressors, such as I am.

Answe. It is true. the Lord discovereth to some, great sight of their sin and misery, and they are thereby put under great legal terrours. But as all are not brought in by that sensible preparatory Law-work, (as

we shewed before) So even those who are dealt with after that way, are very differently and variously exercised in regard of degrees of terrour, and of continuance of that work : The Jaylor hath a violent work of very short continuance ; *Paul* hath a work continuing three days : Some persons are in bondage through fear of death all their days, *Heb. 2.* so that we must not limit the Lord to one way of working here. The main thing we are to look unto in these legal wakenings and convictions of sin and misery, is, If the Lord reach these ends in us, for which usually these stirrings and convictions are sent into the soul ; and if these ends be reached, it is well, we are not to vex our selves about any preparatory work further. Now, these ends which God driveth ordinarily with sinners, by these legal terrours and wakenings of conscience, are four.

First, The Lord discovers sights of mens sin and misery to them, to chase them out of themselves, and to put them out of conceit of their own righteousness. Men naturally have great thoughts of themselves, and do incline much to the covenant of works. The Lord therefore doth discover to them so much of their sin and corruption, even in their best things, that they are made to loath themselves, and to despair of relief in themselves, and so they are forced to flee out of themselves, and from the Covenant of works, to seek refuge elsewhere, *Heb, 6. 18.* They become dead to themselves and the Law, as to the point of justification, *Rom. 7. 4.* *Then have they no more confidence in the flesh,* *Phil. 3. 3.* This is supposed in the offers of *Christ, coming to seek and save that which was lost,* *Luk. 19. 10.* and to be *Physician to those who are sick,* *Mat. 9. 12.*

The second great end, is, to commend Christ Jesus to mens hearts above all things, that so they might fall

in

in love with him, and betake themselves to that treasure and jewel which only enricheth, *Mat. 12. 44.* and by so doing may serve the Lords design in the contrivement of the Gospel, which was the manifestation of his free grace through Christ Jesus, in the salvation of men. The sight of a mans own misery and damnable estate by nature, is a ready way to make him prize Christ highly, who alone can set such a wretch at liberty. Yea, it not only leadeth a man to an high esteem of Christ, but also of all things that relate to that way of Salvation, as Grace, New-Covenant, Faith, &c. and maketh him carefully to gather and treasure up his *Michtams* or golden Scriptures for the confirmation of his interest in these things.

The third great end, is, To deter and scar people from sin, and to make them fall out with it, and consent to put their neck under all his yoke. God kindleth some sparkles of Hell in mens bosoms by the discovery of their sin, as a ready mean to make them henceforth stand in awe, *knowing how bitter a thing it is to depart from the Lord, Jer. 2. 19.* So we find rest offered to the weary, upon condition they will take on Christs yoke, *Mat. 11. 29.* And God offereth to own men as their God and Father, upon condition they will allow no peaceable abode to *Belial*, *2. Cor. 6. 14, 17. 18.*

The fourth great end, is, to work up men to a patient and thankful submission to all the Masters pleasure. This is a singular piece of work, *Ezek. 16. 63.* Then shalt thou not open thy mouth any more, The sight of a mans own vileness and deservings, maketh him silent, and to lay his hand on his mouth, whatsoever God doth unto him, *Psal. 39. 9. I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it. Ezra 9. 13. God hath punished us less than our iniquities. Micah. 7. 9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned,*

sinned. The man careth not what God doth to him, or how he deal with him, if he save him from the deserved wrath to come. Also, any mercy is a large mercy to him who hath seen such a sight of himself, Gen. 32. 10. *he is less than the least of mercies, any crumb falling from his Masters Table is welcome*, Mat. 15. 27. he thinks it rich mercy that he is not consumed, Lam. 3. 22. This is the thing that marvelously maketh his poor afflicted people so silent under, and satisfied with their lot; Nay, they think he deserveth Hell, who openeth his mouth at any thing God doth to him, since he hath pardoned his transgressions. So then, for satisfying the Objection, I say, if the Lord hath driven thee out of thy self, and commended Christ to thy heart above all things, and made thee resolve on his strength to wage War with every known transgression. and thou art, in some measure, as a weaned Child, acquiescing in what he doth unto thee, *desiring to lay thy hand on thy mouth thankfully*; Then thy convictions of sin and misery, and whatsoever thou do'st, plead as a preparatory work, is sufficient, and thou art to debate no more about it; only be advised to study new discoveries of the sense of thy lost condition every day, because of thy old and new sins, and also to see fresh help in Christ, who is a Priest for ever to make intercession and to have the work of sanctification and patience with thankfulness renewed and quickned often: for somewhat of that work, which abaseth thee, exalteth Christ, and conformeth to his will, must convey thee throughout all thy life-time in this World.

We come now to speak of some more clear and sure marks, by which men may take up their gracious state and interest in Christ.

The first thing whereby men know it, is, their closing with Christ in the Gospel, wherein he is held forth.

This

This is believing, or *Faith*, which is the condition of the Covenant. *Rom. 4. 16.* It is faith, &c. *Act 16. 31. Believe... and thou shalt be Saved.* Now, although in propriety of speech, it is hard to prove an interest in faith, it being our very interest in him; yet the heart closing with Christ Jesus, is so discernable in it self, that it may well be placed amongst the marks, of a gracious state: And if a man can make out this, that he believeth on, and in Christ Jesus, he thereby doth prove a very true interest in him. Many are prejudiced at this as a mark, upon one of these three grounds ordinarily. (1) Some conceive faith to be a difficult mysterious thing, hardly attainable. To these I say, do not mistake; Faith is not so difficult as many do apprehend it to be. I grant true faith in the meanest degree is the gift of God, and above the power of flesh and blood: for God must draw men to Christ, *Phil. 1. 29. Job. 6. 44.* Yet, it were a reflection upon Christ, and all he hath done, to say it were a matter of insuperable difficulty, as is clear, *Rom. 10. 6,--11.* it were according to that Scripture, as much upon the matter, as to say, Christ came not from Heaven, is not risen from the dead, or ascended victorious to Heaven. I say, he hath made the way to Heaven most easie; and faith, which is the condition required on our part, more easie than men do imagine. For the better understanding of this, consider, that justifying faith, is not to believe that I am elected, or, to believe that God loveth me, or that Christ died for me, or the like. These things are indeed very difficult and almost impossible at the first hand to be obtained by those who are serious, whilst natural Atheists, and deluded Hypocrites find no difficulty in asserting all those things. I say, true justifying faith is not any of the foresaid things: neither is it simply the believing of any sentence that is written or that

can be thought upon. I grant, he that believeth on Christ Jesus, believeth what God hath said about mans sinful miserable condition by nature, and he believeth that to be true, That there is life in the Son, who was slain, *and is risen again from the dead, &c.* But none of these, nor the believing of many such truths, do speak out justifying faith, or that believing on the Son of God spoken of in Scripture; for then it were simply an act of the understanding: But true justifying Faith, which we now seek after, as a good mark of Interest in Christ, is chiefly and principally an act or work of the heart and will, having presupposed sundry things about truth in the understanding, with the heart it is believed unto Salvation, *Rom. 10. 10.* and although it seem (*vers. 9* of that Chapter) that a man is saved upon condition that he believe this truth, *God raised Christ from the dead*; yet we must understand another thing there, and *vers. 10.* than the believing the truth of that proposition: For, beside that all Devils have that Faith whereby they believe that God *raised Christ from the dead*. So the Scripture hath clearly resolved justifying Faith into a receiving of Christ, *Joh. 1. 12.* The receiving of Christ is there explained to be the believing on his Name, it is still called a staying on the Lord, *Isa. 26. 3.* a trusting in God, often mentioned in the *Psalms*, and the word is a leaning on him, it is a believing on Christ, *Joh. 6. 29.* and often so exprest in the New Testament. When God maketh men believe savingly, *He is said to draw them unto Christ*; and when the Lord inviteth them to believe, *he calleth them to come to him*, *Joh. 6. 37, 44.* *The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man finding a Jewel, wherewith he selleth in love*, *Mat. 13. 44, to 46.* Now I say, this action of the heart on Christ Jesus, is not so difficult a thing as is conceived: Shall that be judged a mysterious difficult thing, which doth consist much in desire? If men have but an appetite, *Key*

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have it; for, they are blessed that hunger after righteousness, Mat. 5. 6. *If you will, you are welcome*, Rev. 22. 17. Is it a matter of such intricacy, and insuperable difficulty, greedily to look to that exalted Saviour, *Isa.* 45. 22. and to receive a thing that is offered, held forth, and declared to be mine, if I will but accept and take it; and in a manner open my mouth and give way to it? Such a thing is faith, *Psal.* 81. 10. if not less. Oh if I could perswade people what is justifying Faith, which impropriateth Christ to me! We often fright people from their just rest and quiet, by making them apprehend faith to be some deep mysterious thing, and by moving unnecessary doubts about it, whereby it is needlessly darkened. (2.) Some make no use of this mark, as judging it a high presumptuous crime to pretend to so excellent a thing as is the very condition of the New Covenant. To those I say, you need not startle so much at it, as if it were high pride to pretend to it; for whatsoever true Faith be, men must resolve to have it, or nothing at all; all other marks are in vain without it; a thousand things besides will not do the business: Unless a man believe, he abideth in the state of Condemnation. *Joh.* 3. 18, 36. (3.) Others do not meddle with this noble mark of faith, because they judge it a work of greatest difficulty to find out Faith where it is. To those I say, It is not so difficult to find it out, since he that believeth, hath the witness in himself, *1 Joh.* 5. 10. It is a thing which by some serious search may be known, not only may we do much to find it out by the preparatory work going before it in many, as the apprehending and believing of a mans lost estate, and that he cannot do his own business, and that there is satisfyingfulness in Christ, very desirable, if he could overtake it. A serious minding of this, with a heart laid open for relief; as also by the ordinary companions and concomitants of it, viz. the liking of Christs Dominion, his Kingdom

2nd propheticall Office, a desire to resign my self wholly up to him to be at his disposing : As also by the native consequences of it, *viz.* the managings of the World, the managings of my own conscience according to the Word, a heart purifying work, a working love, &c. I say, not only may we know faith by these things, but it is discernable by it self and of its own nature : although I deny not but that there must be some help of Gods Spirit, by which we know what is freely given unto us of God, 1 Cor. 2. 11, As also that God hath allowed many evidences and marks, as precious helps, whereby men may clear up faith more fully to themselves, 1 John 5. 13. Yet I still say, that faith, or believing which is some acting of the heart upon Christ in the Gospel, and the transacting with him there, is discernable of it self, and by it self, to a judicious understanding person, with an ordinary influence of the spirit; unless the Lord, for reasons known to himself, do overcloud a mans reflex light, by which he should take up and perceive what is in him.

This justifying faith which we assert to be so discernable, is, in the Lords deep wisdom and gracious condescendence, variously exprest in Scripture, according to the different actings of it upon God, and outgoings after him, so as every one, who hath it, may find and take it up in his own mould. It sometimes acted by a *desire* of union with him in Christ. This is that *looking to him*, Isai. 45. 22. This seems to be a weak act of faith, and far below other actings of it at other times perhaps in that same person. Men will look to what they dare not approach (to their apprehension) which they dare not touch or embrace. They may look to one, to whome they dare not speak. Yet God hath made the promise to faith in that acting, as the forecited Scripture doth shew, and this he hath done mercifully and

wisely; for this is the only discernable way of the acting of faith of some persons sometimes: such are the actings our outgoings of faith exprest in Scripture by *hungering and thirsting after righteousness*, Mat. 5. 6. and that exprest by *willing*, Rev. 22. 17. Again, this faith goeth out sometimes in the act of, *recumbency*, or leaning on the Lord, the soul taking up Christ then as a resting stone; and God hath so held him out, although he be a stumbling stone to others, *Rom.* 9. 33. This acting of it, is hinted in the expressions of *trusting and staying on God*, so often mentioned in Scripture; and precious promises are made to this acting of faith, *Isa.* 26. 34. *God will keep them in perfect peace whose minds are staid on him*, because such do trust in him. *Trust in the Lord, for with him is everlasting strength*, So *Psal.* 125. 1. *They that trust in the Lord, shall be as Mount Zion which abideth for ever.* I say the Lord hath made promises to this way of Faiths acting, as knowing it will go often out after him in this way with many persons, and this way of its acting will be most discernable to them. It goeth out after God sometimes by an act of *waiting*, when the Soul hath somewhat depending before God, and hath not got out his mind satisfyingly about that thing; then Faith doth wait, and so it hath the Promise, *Isa.* 49. 23. Sometimes it acteth in a *wilful* way upon the Lord, when the Soul apprehendeth God thrusting it away, and threatning its ruine; So *Job* 13. 15. *Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him.* The faith of that poor woman, *Mat.* 15. 22, 28. so highly commended by Christ, did go out in this way of wilful acting over the difficulties; and the Lord speaketh much good of it, and to it, because some will be put to it, to exercise faith that way sometimes, and so they have that for their encouragement. It were tedious to instance all the several ways of the acting of faith upon, and its exercise

exercise about, and outgoing after Christ. I may say, according to the various conditions and pressures of the soul of man, the Lord hath variously held out himself and his fulness in Christ under divers notions, as might most fitly meet the distress or condition of man; and accordingly, Faith, which God hath appointed to traffick and travel between Christ and Man, as the instrument of conveyance of his fulness unto man, and of maintaining union and communion with him, acteth variously and differently upon God in Christ; for, Faith is the very shaping out of a mans heart, according to Gods contrivement of Salvation by Christ Jesus, in whom *it pleased the Father that fulness should dwell*; So that let Christ turn what way he will, Faith turneth and pointeth that way. Now, he turneth all ways, in which he can be useful to poor man, and therefore faith acteth accordingly on him, for drawing out of that fulness, according to a mans case and condition. As for example, The soul is naked, destitute of a covering to keep it from the storms of Gods wrath; Christ is *fine raiment*, Rev. 3. 17, 18. Then accordingly Faiths work here is to put on the Lord Jesus, Gal. 3. 27. The Soul is hungry and thirsty after somewhat that may everlastingly satisfy: Christ Jesus is *Milk, Wine, Water, Bread of Life*, and the true *Manna*, Isa. 55. 1, 2. Joh. 6. 4, 51. He is the feast of Fat things, and of Wine refined, Isa. 25. 6. Then the work and exercise of faith, is, to go buy, eat and drink abundantly, Isa. 55. 1. Joh. 6. 53, 57. The soul is pursued for guilt more or less, and is not Law-biding; Christ Jesus is the City of refuge, and the High-Priest there, during whose life-time (that is for ever) the poor man who wins this, is safe. Then the work and exercise of faith is to flee thither for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us, Heb. 6. 1. In a word, whatsoever way he may benefit poor man, so he speaketh

of himself; and as he holdeth out himself in the Scripture, so faith doth point toward him. If he be a Bridegroom, faith will go out in a marriage relation; If he be a Father, Faith pleads the man to be a child; If he be a shepherd, faith pleads the man may be one of his sheep; if he be a Lord, faith calls him so, which none can do but by the Spirit of Jesus; If he be dead and risen again for our Justification, faith believeth God hath raised him on that account. *Rom. 10. 9.* wheresoever he be, there would faith be; and whatsoever he is, faith would be somewhat proportionally. For, by faith the heart is shapen out in breadth and length for him: yea, when the fame and report of him goeth abroad in his truth, although faith see not much, yet it believeth on his Name, upon the very fame he hath sent abroad of himself, *Joh. 1. 12.*

But here for avoiding of mistakes, consider, 1. That although justifying Faith acteth so variously; yet every Believer, who hath a good title to Christ Jesus, hath not all these various actings and exercises of Faith; for his condition craveth them not: and also the Master is pleased not to lead out the faith of some persons at some times in some of these ways (for reasons known to himself) even when their necessity (to their apprehension) calleth for such acting of faith. Surely every one dare not say, *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him.* Many would not have gon up with that woman I spake of, *Mat. 15.* but would have been discouraged and quit the pursuit. It is on this account that Christ doth highly commend the faith of some, beyond the faith of others, *Mat. 8. 10. and 15. 28.* Many good people are much disquieted about their faith, because it goeth not out in all those ways we find recorded in Scripture; But there is hardly any man will be found, whose faith hath acted all these ways. 2. Many of these actings of faith are much

much intended and remitted. They are sometimes strong and vigorous, and discernable; and sometimes they fail, and misbelief doth prevail, so as it were an uncertain thing to judge of a mans estate by these. We find the Saints very different from themselves in regard of the actings of faith sometimes, as we shewed before.³ Each one of these actings of faith, speaketh good to the person in whom it is, and hath promises annexed unto it, as we have said. Yet ⁴. Although these *Actings* of faith have promises annexed unto them, they are not, for that, the condition of the New Covenant; for then every one behoved to have each one of them, which is not true, as we have said before. A promise is made to him who overcometh, but perseverance is not the condition of the New Covenant, but doth suppose it. There are promises made to the exercises of all Graces in Scripture; but only faith is the condition of the Covenant. I say then these promises are made to these actings of Faith, not as such, but as they do suppose Justifying faith, which is the condition of the Covenant: All these are actings of faith, but not as it is justifying. Therefore ⁵. There is somewhat common to all gracious persons, which may be supposed by all the foresaid actings of faith, wherein the nature and essence of justifying faith standeth; and this is the hearts satisfaction about Gods contrivance of Salvation by Christ; when man pleadeth Gods invention of satisfaction to justice through Jesus Christ, in whom all fulness doth dwell now by the Fathers pleasure; when the soul and heart of man acquiesceth in that, then it believeth unto Salvation. As at first, the Lord made man suitable to the Covenant of Works, by creating him perfect, and so putting him in a capacity to perform his Will in that Covenant: So under the New Covenant, when God giveth the new heart to man, he sets the *Idea* and stamp of all his device in the New Covenant upon

the man, so as there is a consonancy to Gods will there. Thus he beareth the image of the second *Adam*, Christ Jesus, on him. This is a great part of the new heart, and is most opposed to works; since now the man absolutely falleth off from works, becoming dead to the Law (as to the point of justification) by the body of Christ, *Rom. 7. 4.* Man perceiving, that God had devised a way of satisfying Divine Justice, and recovering lost man by the incarnation of Christ, he thinks this so good and sure a way, that he absolutely giveth up with the Law as I said before, and closeth with this contrivement; and this is believing or faith, very opposite to works, and all resting thereupon: this cannot fail to be in all gracious persons, in whom many of the actions of faith are not to be found. This doth clearly suppose known distress in a man, without all relief in himself; this supposeth known fulness in Christ as the alone sufficient relief, this imports a sort of impropriation: for the heart pleasing that contrivement, it so far swayeth towards it. This is a thing clearly supposed in all the actings of faith, spoken of before. He that greedily *hungereth*, hath this; and he that *leaneth* hath this, and he that *putteth on Christ* hath this, &c. This is to esteem Christ the *wisdom and power of God to Salvation*. So is he said to be to all that believe, *1 Cor. 1. 24.* They esteem that contrivance wise and sure, befitting God, and that is to believe. On this account Christ, who is the rejected stone to many, is precious to them who believe; a fit stone to recover, fortify, and beautify the tottering building, and father of lost man. *1 Pet. 1.* The Kingdom of God is like a man finding a treasure, for which with joy he selleth all, *Mat. 13. 44.* These words hold out the very way of believing, viz. Salvation is discovered in the Gospel to be by Christ; the heart vallueth that invention as satisfying. This is to believe on the Son of God *lifted up*, which is compared

compared to the *looking up to the brazen Serpent*, *John* 3. 14. It was mans approbation of that device, which made it effectual for his healing. So is it here, *He that believeth, setteth to his seal that God is true. True! where?* In that record he hath born, *That God hath provided life for men; and placed it all in Christ*, 1. *Joh. 5. 14.* 11. *He that believeth not, maketh God a lyer. Where?* In his saying that Christ is a safe and sure way to Heaven. This is well pleased with and acquiescing in that devise, and it is consonant to all, I know, spoken of *Justifying Faith in Scripture*. This is in the believing on Christ and on his Name, the receiving of him, and resting on him for *Salvation in our Catechism*. The *believing that Jesus is the Christ*, that is, the *Anointed one* whom the father hath sealed, and set apart and qualified for the work of reconciling man unto God; and *he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God*, 1. *Joh. 5. 1.* This is to believe *with the heart that God hath raised Christ from the dead*. The man believeth Christ died, and is raised on the account of *satisfaction* for mans transgression: Devils may believe that. Nay, but the man I speak of, *believeth it with his heart*, (which no natural man doth, untill a new heart be given unto him) that is, he cordially pleadeth, is satisfied with, and acquiesceth in this noble invention. And thus faith layeth out it self now and then in its actings, out-goings, and exercise according to all the Covenant relations, under which Christ is held forth in the Scripture.

Now; I say, This faith is discernable, not only in these actings many times; a man may know if his heart doth hunger after Christ and flee for refuge to him, when pursued, and if he doth commit himself unto God, &c. but also in its very nature, as it is justifying, it is discernable, and may be known. A man may clearly know, if from known distress in himself upon the report and
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same of Christs fulness, his heart is well pleased with Gods contrivement in the new Covenant, if it goeth out after Christ in that invention, and pleadeth him a Lord of the life of men, terminating and resting there, and no where else, acquiescing in that contrivement with desire and complacency. This is a discernable thing. Therefore I beseech men impartially to examine themselves; and if they find that their heart hath closed so with that invention of salvation, and is gone out after him as precious, that thereupon they would conclude a sure and true interest in Christ Jesus, and a good claim and title to the crown, since *he that believeth shall never perish, but have everlasting life.* John 3. 16. 36.

Object. Hypocrites and Reprobates have a sort of faith, and are said to believe, Joh. 2. 23. Acts 3. 13. and cannot choose but go out after Christ, and that invention of Salvation, when they hear of it; and they profess they do so, yet are deluded, and so may I be.

Ans. To say nothing of that thought of your heart, [whereby you wonder that any man should not please the contrivement of salvation by Christ, and lead out towards him] as a very promising thing, and speaking out justifying faith to be in your bosom; and to say nothing in contradiction to that which you think, That a natural man whilst such, and before he get a new heart, can please that contrivement, and believe with his heart and affectionately, that which perfectly overthroweth the Covenant of works, and abaseth man in the point of self-righteousness already attained, or that can be won at by him, which is inconsistent with many Scriptural truths; I offer these differences between the faith of all Hypocrites or reprobates, and that true saving justifying faith whereof we have spoken. 1. They never close with Jesus Christ (in that contrivement) and him alone as a sufficient covering of the eyes, as is said of Abraham

to Sarah, Gen. 20. 16. They still hold fast somewhat of their own, at least to help to procure Gods favour and salvation: Their heart doth still speak, as that young mans speech, Luke. 18. 18, 21. doth insinuate, *What want I that I may inherit life?* Beside that, they do still retain their former lovers, and will not break their Covenants with Hell and Death, imagining they may have Christ with these things equally sharing in their heart, contrary to that, *A man cannot serve two Masters*, Mat. 6. 24. Either Christ must be judged absolute Lord, and worthy to be so, or nothing at all. And so it is clear, their heart is not shapen out for that way of salvation by Christ, whom God hath alone made Lord here, in whom all fulness shall dwell. But where justifying faith is, the soul of a man and his heart doth close with Christ, and him alone, having no confidence in the flesh, Phil. 3. 3. Psal. 62. 5. he trusteth only in God. As also the man here giveth up with other lovers, as they stand in competition with Christ; they resolve not to be for another, Hos. 3. 3. They call him Lord, which a man can only do by the Spirit of Christ, 1. Cor. 12. 3. 2. As Hypocrites and Reprobates do never close with Christ alone; so they do never close with full Christ, as he is annointed to be a King to rule over a man in all things; a Priest, to procure pardon; and to make peace for man upon all occasions; a Prophet, to be wisdom, and a Teacher and Counsellor in all cases to man. So they do not receive Christ, especially in the first and third offices. But where true justifying faith is, a man closeth with whole Christ in all his offices, judging all his will good, holy, just and spiritual, Rom. 7. 12. and right concerning all things, Psalm 119. 128. making mention of his righteousness only, Psal. 71, 16. The man also giveth up himself to be taught of him, Mat. 11. 29. So that Christ is made to the true believ-

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er with his own consent, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and compleat redemption, 1. *Cor.* 1. 30. And although he hath not all these things formally in exercise when his heart goeth out after Christ; yet, upon search and tryal, it will be found with him as I have said. 3. Hypocrites and Reprobates do never close with Christ, and all the inconveniencies may follow him; they stick at that, with that man *Mat.* 8. 19. 20. But where true justifying faith is, a man doth close with him on all hazards; he resolveth to forego all, rather than to forego Christ, *Mov.* 10. 28. he reckoneth all to be loss and dung for the excellency of Christ Jesus, as his Lord, and to be found in him, *Phil.* 3. 8. We might give other differences also, as that true faith is operative, purifying the heart, *Acts* 15. 9. working by love, *Gal.* 5. 44. Whilst Hypocrites do only cleanse the outside of the platter, *Mat.* 23. 25. and do all to be seen of men, *Mat.* 6. 5. not seeking the honour that is of God only, and so cannot believe, *John.* 5. 6. We might also shew that true faith is never alone in a man, but attended with other saving graces: But because these things will co-incide with what followeth, and here we are shewing that a man may take up his gracious state by his faith, and the actings thereof on Christ, we pass these things.

The second great mark of a gracious state and true saving interest in Jesus Christ, is, the new creature, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.* This new creation or renovation of that man, is a very sensible change, although not in those who are effectually called from the womb, or in their younger years; because those have had this new creature from that time in them, so as this change in after period of time, is not discernable: yet in those who have been regenerated and brought unto Christ, after they were come to greater age, and so have been more palpably under the pow-

er of darkness, before they were translated into the Kingdom of Christ, *Col. 1. 13.* But in all who do warrantably pretend to Christ, this new creature must be, although some do not know experimentally the contraries of every part of it, so as others do, because they have not been equally, in regard of practice, under the power of darkness. This new creature is called the *new man*, *Gal. 3. 10.* which doth hold out the extent of it. It is not simply a new tongue, or a new hand, but a *new man*. There is a principle of new life and motion put in the man, which is, the new heart: which new principle of life sendeth forth acts of life, or of conformity to the image of him who created it, *Col. 3. 10.* So as the party is renewed in some measure every way. This renovation of the man who is in Christ, may be reduced to these two great heads.

First, There is a renovation, of the mans person, soul and body, in some measure. 1. His understanding is renewed, so as he judgeth Christ Preached in the Gospel, to be the wisdom and power of God, a wise, strong contrivement beseeming God, *1 Cor. 1. 23, 24.* He knoweth the things of God really and solidly, not to be yea and nay, and uncertain fancies, but all to be yea and amen, solid, certain, substantial things, having a desirable accomplishment in Christ, and resolving much in him, *1 Cor. 2. 15. 2 Cor. 1. 18.* Natural men, educated under Gospel ordinances, although they have some notional knowledge of God, Christ, Promises, the motions of the holy Spirit, &c. so as they may Confer, Preach, and dispute of these things; yet they look on them as common received Maxims of Christianity, from which to recede were a singularity and disgrace; but not as real, solid, substantial truths, so as to adventure their Souls and Everlasting being on them. The understanding is renewed also to take up somewhat of God in the

the creatures, as bearing sparks of his glorious attributes. *Psal. 10. 1.* They see the Heavens declaring his Glory and Power, and somewhat of God in providence and dispensations that fall out: *His wondrous works declaring that his Name is near, Psal. 75. 1.* The understanding also taketh up the conditions and cases of the soul otherwise than it was wont to do; As we find the Saints usually speaking in Scripture, *O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, &c. Psal. 16. 2. My Soul said thy face will I seek, Psal. 26. 8. Why art thou cast down, O my Soul? Psal. 42. 5. Psal. 43. 5. Return unto thy rest, O my soul, Psal. 116. 7. 2.* The heart and affections are renewed. The heart is made a new heart, a heart of flesh, capable of impressions, having a copy of his law stamped on it, and fear of God put into it, whereby the mans duty becometh in a manner native and kindly to the man, *Jer. 32. 39, 40. Ezek. 36. 26.* It was before a heart of stone, void of the fear of God, The affections are renewed now. The love is renewed in some good measure: it goeth out after God; *I will love the Lord, Psal. 18. 1.* after his Law, *O how I love thy Law, Psal. 119. 97.* after those who have Gods Image in them, *John 13. 35. 1 Joh. 3. 14.* This love to Gods people is upon a pure account, as they are the children of God, and do keep his Statutes, *1 Pet. 1. 22.* It is with a pure heart, *Psal. 119. 62.* and therefore it goeth towards all such whom the man knoweth or apprehendeth to be such, *Psal. 119. 63. I am a Companion to all them, &c.* In all cases and conditions, even where there is nothing to beautify or commend but the Image of God. And this love is so fervent many times, *1 Pet. 1. 22.* that it putteth it self out in all relations, so as a man seeketh a Godly Wife, a Godly Master, a Godly Servant, a Godly Counsellor, if he have to choose upon, *Psal. 101. 6.* and it is not quenched by many waters, *Cant. 8. 7.* ma

ny imperfections and infirmities, difference in opinion, wrong received will not altogether quench love. Also it is communicative of good according to its measure, and as the case of the poor godly requireth, *Psal. 16. 2. 1 John 3. 17, 18. 19.* The mans hatred is also renewed, and is now bent against sin, *Psal. 119. 113. I hate vain thoughts :* against Gods enemies, as such, *Psal. 139. 21, 22. Do not I hate them that hate thee? &c.* The joy or delight is renewed, for it runneth towards God, *Psal. 73. 25. Whom have I in Heaven? &c.* towards his Law and Will, *Psal. 1. 2. His delight is in the Law of the Lord.* And towards the Godly and their fellowship, *Psal. 16. 3. --- In whom is all my delight.* The sorrow is turned against sin which hath wronged Christ, *Zech. 12. 10. Looking on him whom they have pierced, they mourn, 2 Cor. 7. 11.* The sorrow is godly there; and against what in- croacheth upon Gods honour; they are sorrowful for the --- assemblies, and the reproach of that is their burden, *Zeph. 3. 18.* There is some renovation in all the af- fections, as in every other part of the soul pointing now towards God. 3. The very outward members of the man are renewed, as the Scriptures speak, the tongue, the eye; the ear, the hand, the foot, &c. so that those members, which once were improved as weapons of unrighteousness unto sin, are now improved as weapons of righteousness unto holiness, *Rom. 6. 19.*

Secondly, *A man who is in Christ, is renewed in some measure in all his ways. Behold all things are new, 2 Cor. 5. 17.* The man becomes new, 1. In the way of his interest. He was upon any good before, though but apparent, and at best but external, *Psal. 4. 6.* But now his interest and business is, how to be found in Christ, in that day, *Phil. 3. 9.* or, how to be forth-coming to him, and walk before him in the land of the living, *Psal. 56. 13.* which he would choose among all the mercies that fill this earth,

earth, Psal. 119. 64. The interest of Christ also becometh the mans interest, as appeareth in the song of *Hannah, 1 Sam. 2.* And in the song of *Mary, Luke 1.* It is strange to see people newly converted, and having reached unto the beginnings of knowledge, concern themselves in the publick matters of Christ's Kingdom, so desirous to have him riding prosperously and subduing the people under him. 2. The man that is *in Christ, is renewed in the way of his worship.* He was wont to serve God in the *oldness of the letter*, for the fashion, answering the letter of the command in the outside of duty, which one in whom the *Old man* hath absolute dominion can do? But now he *worshippeth God in the newness of the Spirit Rom. 7. 6.* In a new way, wherein he is helped by the *Spirit of God, Rom, 8. 26.* beyond the reach of flesh and blood. He serveth now the *true and living God, 1 Thess. 1. 9. in Spirit and in truth. John 4. 24.* having spiritual apprehensions of God, and engaged in his very soul in that work, doing and saying truly, and not feignedly, when he worshippeth, still desiring to approach unto him as a *living God*, who heareth and seeth him, and can accept his service. *Psal. 42. 1, 2.* I grant he fails of this many times; yet I may say, such worship he intendeth, and sometimes overtaketh, and doth not much reckon worship, which is not so performed unto God; and the *iniquity of his holy things*, is not the least part of his burthen and exercise; Such a worship, natural men are strangers unto, whilst they babble out of their vain-glorious boastings, *Luke 18. 11, 12.* to an unknown God, *Acts 17. 22. 3.* The man that is *in Christ, is renewed in the way of his outward calling and implomment in the world*; he now resolveth to be about it, because God hath commanded so, *Rom. 12. 11.* and to eye God in it as his last end, *doing it to his glory, 1 Cor. 10. 31.* and studieth to keep some intercount

intercourse with God, in the exercise of his outward employments, as Jacob doth in his latter Will, Gen. 49. 18. and Nehemiah did, Nehem. 2. 4. So as the man resolveth to walk with God, and set him alwayes before him, Psal. 16. 8. wherein I deny not he faileth often. 4. He becometh new in the way of his relations; he becometh a more dutiful Husband, Father, Brother, Master, Servant, Neighbour, &c. Herein doth he exercise himself to keep a conscience void of offence towards men, as well as towards God, Acts 24. 16. 1 Cor. 22. Becoming all things to all men. 5. He becometh now in the way of his lawfull liberties, he studieth to make use of meat, drink, sleep, recreation, apparel, with an eye to God, labouring not to come under the power of any lawful thing, 1 Cor. 6. 12, 13. Nor to give offence to others in the use of these things, Rom. 14. 20, 21. & 15. 2. nor using liberty as an occasion to the flesh, Gal. 5. 13. Yea, he laboureth to use all these things as a stranger on earth, so as his moderations may appear, Phil. 4. 5. And some way he doth eye God, as the last end in these things, 1 Cor. 10. 31. doing all to the glory of God: So as we may say of that man, old things are much past away, all things are in some measure become new, 2 Cor. 5. 15. He that is so new a creature, is undoubtedly in Christ.

This renovation of a man in all manner of conversation, and this being under law to God in all things, is that holiness without which none shall see God. Heb. 12. 1. Men may fancy things to themselves, but unless they truly to approve themselves, unto God in all well-pleasings, and reach some inward testimony of sincerity that way, they shall not assure their hearts before him. The testimony of mens conscience is their rejoycing, 2 Cor. 1. 12. By this we know that we know him, if we keep Commandments, 1 John 2. 3. 1 John 3. 20, 21. No

confidence if the heart condemn. This is the New Creature, having a *principle of new spiritual life* infused by God into the heart, whereby it becometh new, and putteth forth acts of new life throughout the whole man, as we have said, so as he pointeth towards the whole Law; both the commands which forbid sin; so he resolveth to set against secret sins, not to lay a stumbling block before the blind, *Lev. 19. 14.* little sins, which are judged so by many, the least things of the Law, *Matth. 5. 19.* *spiritual sins*, filthiness of the spirit, *1 Cor. 7. 1.* sins of omission, as well as commission, since men are to be judged by these, *Mat. 25. 42, 43, 44* yea, sins that are winded into his natural humor and constitution, and so are as a right eye or hand to him, *Matth. 5. 29.* This new principle of life, by the good hand of God, maketh the man set against every known sin, so far as not to allow peaceable abode in any known darkness, *2 Cor. 6. 14.* As also he pointeth towards those commands which relate to duty, and the quickening of grace in man. It maketh a man respect all known commands, *Psal. 110. 6.* *to live godly, righteously, and soberly, Tit. 2. 12.* yea, and to study a right and sincere way and manner of doing things, resolving not to give over the study of conformity to Gods Will whilst he lives on earth, but still to bend forward towards the price of the high calling of God, *Phil. 3. 13, 14.* This is true holiness, very becoming all those who pretend to be heirs of that holy habitation in the immediate company and fellowship of a holy God, *1 Joh. 3. 3.*

Some may think these things high attainments, and very hard to be attained to. I grant it is true. But first Remember, that there is a very large allowance in the Covenant promised to his people, which maketh things more easie. The Lord hath engaged to take away a *stony heart*, to give a heart of flesh, a new heart, a heart

to fear him for ever; he hath engaged to *put his law in mens heart, to put his fear in their heart, to make them keep that Law; to put his Spirit within them to cause them to keep it*: He hath promised to *satisfie the Priests with fatness, that the souls of the people may be satiated with goodness, and to keep, and water them continually every moment*, Ezek. 26. 29. Jer. 32. 39, 49. and 31. 33. Ezek. 36. 27. Jer. 31. 14. and 31. 12. Isa. 27. 3. and if he must be enquired to do all these things unto men, he engageth to *pour out the Spirit of grace and supplication on them*, and so to learn them how to seek these things, and how to put him to it, to do all for them, Zeck. 12. 10. Secondly, for the satisfaction of the weaker, I grant this new creature, as we have circumscribed and enlarged it, will not be found, in all the degrees of it, in every gracious person. But it is well, if 1. There be a new man, we cannot grant less; *If any man be in Christ, there must be a new creature*; and that is the new man, Ephes. 4. 21, 22, 23, 24. which all must put on who are savingly taught of Christ; There must be some renewing after the image of God in a mans soul and body; There must be somewhat of every part of the man pointing towards God: although I grant every one cannot prove this to others, neither discern it in himself, because many know not the distinct parts of the soul, nor pieces of reformation competent to every part of soul and body. Yet it will be found there is some such thing in them, yea, they have a witness of it within them, if you make the thing plain and clear to them what it is. 2. There must be such a respect unto Gods known Commands, that a man doth not allow peaceably any known iniquity to dwell in him, for *what concord is between light and darkness?* 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15, 16. Psal. 119. and 66. 18. *he must not regard iniquity*. I grant men may be ignorant of many commands, and many sins, and

may imagine in some cases; that some sins are not hateful unto God. But supposing that they are instructed in these things, there can be no agreement between righteousness and unrighteousness. 3. Men must point towards all the Law of God, in their honest resolutions; for this is nothing else, than to give up the heart unto God, to put his Law in it without exception, which is a part of the Covenant we are to make with God, *Heb. 8. 10.* I grant many know not how to point towards Gods Law in all their wayes; but if it be made manifest unto them, how that should be done, they will point at it. And it is true, they will many times fail of their resolutions in their practice; yet when they have failed, they can say, They did resolve other-wayes, and will yet honestly, and without guile resolve to do other wayes, and it will prove their affliction to have failed of their resolution, when the Lord discovereth it to them, which he will in due time.

4. When we are to judge of our state by the new creature, we must do it at a convenient time, when we are in good case, at least, not when we are in worst case; for the flesh and spirit do Lust and Fight against other, *Gal. 5. 17.* and sometimes the one, and sometimes the other doth prevail. Now I say, we must chuse a convenient time, when the spiritual part is not by some temptation worsted and over-powred by the flesh; for in that case the new creature is recoyled back in its streams, and much returned to the fountain and the habits, except in some small things not easily discernable, whereby it maketh opposition to the flesh, according to the foresaid Scripture: for, now it is time of winter in the soul, and we may not expect fruit, yea, not leaves, as in some other season; only here, lest profane Atheists should make advantage of this, we will say, *That the Spirit doth often prevail over the flesh in a godly man, and*

the

the scope, aim, tenour, and drift of his way is in the Law of the Lord, that is his walk. *Psal. 119. 1.* whereas the pathway, and ordinary course of the wicked is sin, as is often hinted in the book of the *Proverbs* of Solomon. And if it happen that a godly man be over-mastered by any transgression, ordinarily it is his sad exercise; and we suppose he keeps it still in dependency before God, to have it rectified, as *David* speaketh, *Psal. 56. 13.* *Wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling?*

Object. *Atheists and Hypocrites may have great changes and renovation wrought upon them, and in them, and I fear mine be such.*

Answer. I grant that Atheists and hypocrites have many things in them which do look like the new Creature.

First, In regard of the parts of the man. They may (1.) Come to much knowledge, as *Heb. 6. 4* They are enlightened. (2.) There may be a zeal amongst their affections, as they receive the word with joy, *Mat. 13. 20.* (3.) They may reach a great deal of outward reformation in the outward man, both about freedom from sin, and engagement to positive duty, as that Pharisee did, *Luk. 18. 11, 12.* Yea, (4.) In regard of their practical understanding, they may judge some things of God to be excellent. The people said that never man spake as Christ, *John 7. 46.*

Secondly, Hypocrites, may have a great deal of profession (1.) They may talk of the Law and Gospel, and Covenant, as the wicked do, *Psal. 50. 16.* (2.) They may confess sin openly to their own shame, as King *Saul* did, *1 Sam. 26. 21.* (3.) They may humble themselves in sackcloth with *Ahab*, *1 Kings 21. 27.* (4.) They may enquire busily after duty, and come chearfully to receive it, *Isa. 58. 2.* (5.) They may joyn with Gods interest in a hard and difficult time, as *Demas*, and other hypocrites in the book of the *Acts* of the *Apostles*.

who afterwards fell off. (6.) They may give much of their goods to God and the Saints, as *Acts* 5. 1, 2. if not all their goods, *1 Cor.* 13. 3. Yea, (7.) It is not impossible for some such, being straitly engaged in their credit, to give their bodies to be burnt, as in the fore-cited place.

Thirdly, Hypocrites may advance far in the common and ordinary steps of a Christian work, such as the Elect have, when God leads them captive. As, (1) They may be under great convictions of sin, as *Judas* was, *Mat.* 27. 3, 4, 5. So was King *Saul* often. (2) They may tremble at the word of God, and be under much terror, as *Felix* was, *Act.* 24. 25. (3.) They may rejoyce in receiving of the Truth, as *Mat.* 13. 20. (4.) They may be in some peace and quiet in expectation of salvation by Christ, as the foolish Virgins were, *Mat.* 25. 24. (5.) All this may be backed and followed with some good measure of reformation. The unclean spirit may go out of them, *Mat.* 22. 43. *Luke* 18. 11, 12. (6.) This work may seem to be confirmed by some special experiences and tastings of the good word of God, *Heb.* 6. 4.

Fourthly, Hypocrites may have some things very like the saving graces of the Spirit : As, (1) They may have a sort of faith with *Simon Magus*, *Acts* 8. 13. (2.) A sort of repentance, and walk mournfully, *Mal.* 3. 14. (3.) A great fear of God, such as *Balaam*, who for a house full of gold would not go with the messenger of *Balak*, without leave asked of God, and given, *Num.* 22. 18. (4.) They have a sort of hope, *Job* 13. 13. (5.) They have some love : So had *Herod* to *John*, *Mar.* 6. 26. I need not to insist, it is out of all question they have counterfeits of all saving graces.

Fifthly, They have somewhat like the special communications of God, and the witnessing of his Spirit, as some-

of somewhat like the Powers of the World to come powerfully on them, with some flashes of joy arising thence, as *Heb.* 6. 4, 5. Notwithstanding all which they are but almost perswaded with *Agrippa* to be Christians, *Acts* 26. 28.

It were tedious to speak particularly to each of these things, and to clear up, that they are all but rotten ware: I shall condescend upon some few things, wherein a truly renewed man, who is in Christ, doth differ from hypocrites and reprobates.

1. Whatsoever change be in Hypocrites yet their heart is not changed, and made new. The new heart is only given to the Elect, when they are converted, and brought under the bond of the Covenant, *Jer.* 32. 39. *Ezek.* 36. 26. Hypocrites did never apprehend Christ as the only satisfying good in all the world, for which with joy, they would quit all: for then the Kingdom of God were entered in them, *Mat.* 13. 44. The truly renewed man dare and can upon good ground say, and hath a testimony of it from on high, that his heart hath been changed in taking up of Christ, and hath been led out after him, as the only enriching Treasure, in whom to be found, he accounteth all things else loss and dung, *Phil.* 3. 8. 9.

2. Whatsoever reformation and profession Hypocrites do attain unto, as it cometh not from a new heart, and pure principle of zeal for God, so it is alwayes for some wicked and by-end, as to be seen of men, *Mat.* 6. 5. or to evite and shun some outward strait, to be free of Gods wrath, and the trouble of their own conscience, *Isa.* 59. 3. *Mal.* 3. 14. In testimony of this, they never have respect to all known commands, else they should never be ashamed, *Pf.* 119. 6. nor do they without approved guile in their own heart, resolve against a very known iniquity; else they were freed of heart-condemnings, and so might justly have confidence before God,

1 *John* 3. 20. If in never so mean a case, they did from a principle of love unto, and of zeal for Christ, and for a right end, confess and profess him, Christ were obliged by his own word to confess them before his Father, *Mat.* 10. 30.

3. Whatsoever length Hypocrites advance in that work, by which the people are led in unto Christ. yet they never seek, *First*, the Kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, *Mat.* 6. 33. the one thing that is necessary, (*viz.*) Christs friendship and fellowship, is never their one thing, and heart-satisfying choice; else that better part would never be taken from them, *Luke* 10. 42.

4. Whatsoever counterfeits of grace are in hypocrites, yet they are all bred there, without any saving work of the Spirit of Christ, and it is enough to exclude them from the benefit of this mark, that they are never denied to those things, nor emptied of them, but still to rest on them as their Saviour, so that they submit not unto the righteousness of God, *Rom.* 10. 3. and that is enough to keep them at a distance from Christ, who will never clout that old garment of hypocrites with his fine new Linnen, nor put his new Wine in these old bottels, *Mat.* 9. 16, 17.

5. We may say, let Hypocrites, Reprobates, or Atheists have what they can; they want the three great essentials of Religion and true Christianity: First, They are not broken in themselves, and emptied even of their righteousness, the length of self-loathing, yet lying open for relief. Such lost ones Christ came to seek and save, *Luke* 19. 10. Secondly, They never took up Christ Jesus as the only treasure and jewel that can only enrich, and should satisfy, and therefore have never cordially agreed unto Gods contrivement in the Covenant, and so are not worthy of him; neither hath the Kingdom of God savingly entred into their heart, *Mat.* 13. 44. Thirdly

ly, They never in earnest do close with Christs whole yoke without exception, judging all his will just and good, holy and spiritual, as *Rom. 7. 12.* and therefore no rest allowed on them by Christ, *Mat. 11. 29.* Therefore whosoever thou art who canst lay clear and just claim to these three foresaid things, thou art beyond the reach of all atheists, hypocrites and reprobates in the world, as having answered the great ends and intents of Law and Gospel.

Object. I am clear sometimes, I think to lay claim to that mark of the new creature; yet at other times, sin doth so prevail over me, that I am made to question all the work within me.

Ans. It is much to be lamented, that people professing his Name, should be so slighted and enslaved by transgression as many are. Yet in answer to the objection, if it be seriously propounded, we say, the Saints are found in Scripture justly laying claim unto God and his Covenant, when iniquity did prevail over them, as we find, *Psal. 65. 3. Iniquities prevail against me, as for our transgressions, thou wilt do them away, Rom. 7. 25.* Paul thanks God through Christ, when a law in his members leads him captive unto sin: But for the better understanding, and safe application of such truths, we must difference betwixt gross outbreakings and ordinary infirmities, or sins that come unawares upon a man, without fore-thought or any deliberation. As for the former sort it is hard for a man, whilest he is under the power of them, to see his gracious change, although it be in him, and very hard to draw any comfort from it, until the man be in some measure recovered, and beginning seriously to resent such sins, and to resolve against them. We find *David* calling himself Gods servant, quickly after his numbering of Gods people, but he was then under the serious resentment of sin, *Sam. 24. 18. Jonah* layeth claim to God

God as his Master under his rebellion, but he is then repenting it, and in a spirit of revenge against himself for his sin, *Jon* 1. 9, 10, 12. Next, as for these sins of infirmity, and daily incurſion, and heart-ills, ſuch as theſe whereof *Paul* doth complain (it is like) were. We ſhall draw out ſome things from that ſeventh Chapter to the *Romans*, whereupon *Paul* maintains his intereſt in *Chriſt*; and if you can apply them it is well. (1.) When *Paul* findeth that he doth much fail, and cannot reach conformity to Gods Law, he doth not blame the Law, as being too ſtrict, ſo as men cannot keep it, as Hypocrites uſe to ſpeak; but he doth blame himſelf as being carnal; and he ſaith of the Law, that it is Good Holy and Spiritual, *Rev.* 7. 12, 14. (2.) He can ſay, he failed of a good which he intended and did out-ſhoot himſelf, and he had often honeſtly reſolved againſt the evil which he fell into, *Rom.* 7. 15, 18, 19. (3.) He ſaith that the prevailing of ſin over him is his exerciſe, ſo as he judgeth himſelf wretched, becauſe of ſuch a body of death, from which he longeth to be delivered, *Rom.* 7. 24, (4.) He ſaith, that whiſt he is under the power and law of ſin, There is ſomewhat in the bottom of his heart oppoſing it, although over-maſtered by it which would be another way, and when that gets the upper hand, it is a delightſome thing, *Rom.* 7. 23, 25. upon theſe things he thanks God in *Chriſt*, that there is no condemnation, *Rom.* 7. 25. *Rom.* 8. 1. Now then look if ye can lay claim to theſe things. (1.) If you do blame your ſelf, and approve the Law, whiſt you fail. (2.) If you can ſay that you do often reſolve againſt ſin honeſtly, and without known guile, and do ſo reſolve the contrary good before the evil break in upon you. (3.) If you can ſay, that you are ſo far exerciſed with your failings as to judge your ſelf wretched, becauſe of ſuch things, and a body of death, which is the Root and Foun-

retain of such things. (4.) If you can say, that there is
for a party within you opposing these evils, which would be
in at the right way, and, as it were, is in its Element,
these when it is in Gods way, it is well; only be advised not
We to take rest until in some measure, you be rid of the
r to ground of this objection, or at least, until you can very
t in clearly say, you are waging war with these things: Now
hen a good help against the prevailing power of sin, is, to
ach cleave close to Christ Jesus by Faith, which as it is a de-
y, as irable part of sanctification, and a notable piece of Con-
ites formity to Gods will, and most subservient unto his de-
car- sign in the Gospel, Gal. 2, 20, 21. and so should be
toly much endeavoured by people, as a work pleasing to God,
he Job. 6. 29. So it is the ready way to draw life and sap
im- from Christ, the blessed root for fruitfulness in all cases,
evils as John 15. 4, 5.

Object. *I do not partake of these special communicati-
ons of God, mentioned in the Scripture, and aſtings and
of going of his Spirit, whereof gracious people often are speak-
7. 18, and whereunto they attain, the want of these things
w- maketh me much suspect my state.*

of Answ. I shall shortly hint some of these excellent com-
rich munications; and I hope upon a right discovery of them
per here will be but small ground found for the jealous com-
pon plaints of many gracious people.

no First, (besides these convictions of the Spirit of God,
book which use to usher Christs way unto the Souls of men,
me and these also which afterwards do ordinarily attend them)
If there is a Seal of the Spirit of God spoken of in Scrip-
est- ture, the principal thing whereof is the Sanctifying work
on- the Holy Ghost imprinting the draughts and lineaments
If Gods Image, and revealed will upon a man, as a seal
ail- signer doth leave an impression and stamp of its like-
uch- ness upon the thing sealed; so it is 2 Tim. 2. 19. *The
un- foundation of God---having this seal, The Lord knoweth
ain them*

them who are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity : And thus I conceive, the Seal to be called a Witness, 1 John 5. 10. He that believeth, hath the witness in himself, that is, the ground upon which an interest in Christ is to be made out and proved, are in every believer ; for he hath somewhat of the sanctifying work of Gods Spirit in him, which is a sure (although not always a clear and manifest) witness.

Secondly, there is *Communion* with God, much talked of among Christians, whereby they understand the sensible presence of God, refreshing the soul exceedingly, but if we speak properly, communion with God, is a mutual interest between God and Man, who hath close fellowship with him in Christ. It is a commonness, or a common interest between God and a Man ; not only is a man interested in God himself, but in all that is the Lords ; so the Lord hath a special interest in the man, and so all that belongs to him. There is a communion between Husband and Wife, whereby they have a special Interest in each others persons, goods and concernments ; so is it here : there is such a Communion with God. He is our God, and all things are ours, because he is ours. In this Communion with God, all true believers have at all times, as we shall shew afterwards : I grant there is an actual improvement of that Communion, whereby men do not boldly meddle with any thing that belongs unto God, and do not meddle with himself as their own, with much homeliness and familiarity, especially in worship : when the soul doth converse with a living God, partaking of the Divine Nature, growing like unto him, and sweetly travelling through his Attributes, and, with some confidence of interest, viewing these things, as the mans own goods and gear, this we call Communion with God in his ordinances. This indeed is not ordinarily nor frequently

made out to men, and all his people do not equally partake of it; and it is true, that what is in God, goeth not out for the behoof of the man, to his apprehension equally at all times: yet certainly Communion with God, properly so called, (*viz.*) that commonness of interest between God and a Man, who is savingly in Covenant with him, doth alwayes stand firm and sure: and so much of Communion with God in Ordinances, have all believers, as that their heart converseth wth a Living God there now, and then, and is in some measure changed into that same Image, and there needeth be no doubt any further about it.

Thirdly, There is a thing which is called *Fellowship* with God, often mistaken also among believers. If by *fellowship*, be meant the walking in our duty, as in the light of a living God, who seeth and heareth us, and is witness to all our carriage. It is a thing common unto all gracious men, they have it habitually, and in design, *Psal.* 16.8. *I have set the Lord alwayes before me*, yea, often they have it actually in exercise, when their spirit is in any good frame; they walk, as if they saw God standing by them, and have some thoughts of his favour through Christ; *Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son*, 1 John 1. 3. If we by *Fellowship*, do mean a sweet, refreshing, familiar, sensible conversing with God, which doth delight and refresh the soul, (beside what the conscience of duty doth;) It is then a walking in the light of his countenance, and a good part of sensible pretence; and although it seemeth *Job* had much of it, *whilest it is said he walked with God*, *Gen.* 5.24. yet it is not so ordinary as the former, so common to all Christians; for here the soul is filled with marrow and fatness, following hard after its guide, and singularly upheld by his right hand, *Psal.* 5, 8.

Fourthly,

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Fourthly, There is a thing which is called *Access* to God, and this I take to be the removing of obstructions out of the way between a Man and God, so as the man is admitted to come near. We are said to have access to a great person, when doors are cast open, guards removed from about him, and we admitted to come close at him; so it is here. Now this *Access* in Scripture, sometimes taken for Christs preparing of the way, the removing of enmity between God and Sinners, so as *we now have a patent way to come unto God through Christ* *Ephes. 2. 18.* Sometimes it is taken for the actual improvement of that access purchased by Christ, when a man finds all obstructions and differences, which do ordinarily fall in between him and God, removed; God is no uncouth to him, nor as a stranger, keeping up himself from him, or frowning on him, *but the man is admitted to come even unto his seat, as Job 23. 3.* Of the want of this doth Job complain, *Job 23. 8, 9.* whilst he saith, *go forward, backward, to the right and left hand, and find him not.* The first sort of access is common to all Believers, they are brought near by the blood of the Covenant, and are no more far off, as the deadly enmity between God and them is removed. But access, in the other sense is dispenced more, according to the Lords absolute sovereignty and pleasure, and it is left in the power of Believers to obstruct it unto themselves, until it please the Lord mercifully and freely to grant it unto them again, so it is up and down, and there needs be no question (as to mans state) about it.

Fifthly, There is a thing called *Liberty* before God, and this properly is freedom, or free speaking unto God, many do much question their state, because of the way of this now and then, since the Scripture hath said; *When the Spirit is, there is liberty* *2 Cor. 3. 17.* but they do justly confine that liberty, spoken of there, unto this free speaking

speaking before God. I grant where the Spirit of the Lord doth savingly discover Gods will in the Scripture to a man, There is liberty from any obligation to the Ceremonial Law, and from the condemning power of the Moral Law, and from much of that gross darkness and ignorance, which is on natural hearts as a vail hiding Christ in the Gospel from them. I grant also, that sometimes, even this liberty which is a free communion with God, *and ordering of our case before him, and filling of our mouths with Arguments*, Job. 23. 4. is granted to the godly, but not as liberty taken in the former senses. Although *the Lord hath obliged himself to pour out the Spirit of prayer upon all the house of David in some measure* Zech. 12. 10. Yet this communication of the Spirit, which we call liberty, or free speaking unto God, dependeth much on the Lords absolute pleasure; when, and what measure to allow it. This liberty which we call freedom, or free speaking with God in prayer, is sometimes much abstracted from any great confidence in the time of prayer; (at least, until it draw towards the close of it) it standeth much in a vivacity of the understanding to take up the case which a man is to speak before God, so as he can order his case; and next, there be words or verbal expressions, elegant, suitable, and very emphatical, or powerful and pithy; there is also joyned a fervency of spirit in prayer, whereof the Scripture speaketh; the soul is hot and bended, and very intent: There is also ordinarily in this liberty, a special melting of the heart (often joyned with a great measure of the Spirit of grace and supplication, Zech. 10. 11.) for so the soul is poured out before God as for a first-born: Such is the liberty, which many Saints get before God, whilst in much brekenness of heart, and fervency of spirit, they are admitted to speak their mind fully to God, as a Living God, noticing (at least) their Prayer. Sometimes this liberty is joyned with

with confidence, and then it is not only a free, but also a bold speaking before God; *it is that boldness with confidence, Ephes. 3. 12.* this is more rarely imparted unto men than the former, yet it is ordinary. It hath in it beside what we spake before, some influence of the Spirit upon faith, making it put out some vigorous acting in Prayer; there is a sweet mournful frame of Spirit, by which a man poureth out his heart in Gods bosome, and with some confidence of his Favour and good will, pleadeth his cause before him, *as a living God*; and this is all the sensible presence that many Saints do attain unto: there is no ground of doubt about a mans estate in point of liberty before God in this last fence, because there is nothing essential to the making up of a gracious state here: some have it, some want; some have it at some times, and not at other times, so that it is much up and down; yet I may say, gracious men may do much (by a very ordinary influence) in contributing towards the attaining and retaining, or keeping of such a frame of spirit.

Sixthly, There is a thing called *Influence, or breathing of the Spirit*. This gracious influence (for of such only do I now speak) is either *ordinary*, and this is the operation of the holy Spirit on the soul; and the habits of grace there, whereby they are still kept alive, and in some exercise and acting, although not very discernable. This influence (I conceive) doth alwayes attend Believers, *and is that keeping and watering night and day, and every moment, promised, Isa. 27. 3.* Or, this influence is more *singular* and special, and is the same to a gracious (although a withered) soul, *as the wind and breath to the dry bones, putting them in good case, Ezek. 37. 9, 10.* And *as the dew or rain to the grass, or newly-mowen field and parched ground. Psal. 72. 6.* Such influence is meant, *Cant. 4. 16.* by the blowing of the South

South wind, making the Spices to flow out. When the Spirit moveth thus, there is an edge put upon the graces of God in the soul, and they are made to act more vigorously. *This is the enlarging of the heart, by which a man doth run in the wayes of God, Psal. 119. 32.* This influence is more discernable than the former, and not so ordinarily communicated. Also here, sometimes the wind bloweth more upon one grace, and sometimes more discernably upon another, and often upon many of the graces together; and according to the lesser, or greater measure of this influence, the soul acteth more or less vigorously towards God: and since faith is a created grace in the soul, this influence of the Spirit is upon it, sometimes less, sometimes more, and accordingly is the assurance of faith, small or great.

Seventhly, There is the *hearing* of prayer often spoken of in Scripture, and many vex themselves about it, alledging that they know nothing of it experimentally. I grant there is a favourable hearing of prayer: But we must remember it is two fold.

Either, 1. It is such as a man is simply to believe by way of argument on Scriptural grounds. As if I be fled unto Christ, and do approach unto God in him, pray according to his will, *not regarding iniquity in my heart*, exercising faith about the thing I pray for, absolutely or conditionally, according to the nature of the thing and promises about it. I am obliged to believe that God heareth my prayer, *and will give what is good, according to the Scriptures, Job. 14. 13, 14. Whatsoever ye ask in my name, I will do it, 1 John 5. 14. This is our confidence, that whatsoever we ask according to his will, he heareth us, Mark 3. 24.* Believe that you receive, and you shall have what you desire, *Psal. 66. 18. If I regard iniquity, he will not hear.* Then if I regard not iniquity, I may believe that he doth hear me.

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Or, 2.

Or, 2. A man doth sensibly perceive that God heareth his prayer, It is made out to his heart without any syllogistical deduction. Such a hearing of prayer got *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 8. *Her countenance was no more sad.* Surely the Lord did breath upon her faith, and made her believe that she was heard, and she could not make it out by any argument, for she had not grounds whereupon to build the premises of the argument according to Scripture in that particular. God did stamp it in some way upon her heart sensibly, and so made her believe it. This is but rarely granted, especially in cases clearly deducible in Scripture. And therefore people are much to be satisfied in exercising their faith about the other, and let God give of this latter what he pleaseth. A mans gracious state should not be brought upon debate, upon the account of such hearing of prayer.

Eightly, There is *Assurance* of Gods favour by the witnessing of our own spirits; which assurance, is deduced by way of argument syllogistically, Thus, *Whosoever believeth on Christ shall never perish; But I do believe on Christ: Therefore I shall never perish.* *Whoso hath respect unto all Gods Commandments, shall never be ashamed; But I have respect unto all his Commands: Therefore, I shall never be ashamed.* I say, by reasoning thus, and comparing Spiritual things with spiritual things, a man may attain unto a good certainty of his Gracious State. It is supposed, 1 *John* 3. 18, 19. That by loving the Brethren in deed and in truth, we may assure our hearts before God, and that a man may rejoyce upon the Testimony of a Good Conscience, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. A man may have confidence, if his heart do not condemn him, 1 *John* 3. 21. We may then attain unto some assurance (although not full assurance) by the witness of our own spirit. I do not deny, that in this witnessing of our Spirits towards Assurance, there is some concurrence of the Spirit

Spirit of God. But, I conceive there needeth but a very ordinary influence, without which we can do nothing. Now, this assurance, such as it is, may be reached by intelligent Believers, who keep a good conscience in their walk. So I hope, there needs be no debate about it, as to a mans gracious state; for if a man will clear himself of heart condemnings, he will speedily reach this assurance.

Ninthly, There is a Witnessing of *Gods Spirit* mentioned, *Rom. 8. 16. A bearing witness with our Spirits that we are the Children of God.* This operation of the Spirit is best understood, if we produce any syllogism by which our spirit doth witness our Sonship: as for example, Whosoever loveth the Brethren, *is past from Death to Life*, and consequently is in Christ, But I love the Brethren; Therefore I am passed from Death to Life, Here there is a threefold operation of the Spirit, or Three Operations rather.

The first is a beam of *Divine Light* upon the first Proposition, perswading the *Divine Authority* of it as the Word of God; the *Spirit of the Lord* must witness the *Divinity of the Scripture*, and that is the infallible Word of God, far beyond all other arguments can be used for it.

The second Operation is, *A Glorious beam of Light from the Spirit, shining upon the second proposition*, and so upon his own graces in the Soul, discovering them to be true graces; and such as the Scripture calleth so. Thus are we said to know *by his Spirit, the things freely given to us of God*, *1 Cor. 2. 13.*

The third Operation is, *in order to the third proposition of the Argument, or the Conclusion*; and this I conceive, to be nothing else, but *an influence upon Faith, strengthening it to draw a conclusion of full assurance upon the foresaid premises.* Now (with submission unto others, who have greater light in the Scripture, and more experience of

these precious communications) I do conceive the Witness of the Spirit, or witness of it, which is mentioned, *Rom. 8. 16.* is not that first operation upon the first proposition; for that operation is that testimony of the Spirit, by which he beareth witness to the Divinity of the whole Scripture, and asserteth the Divine authority of it unto the souls of gracious men; and such an operation may be upon a truth of Scripture, which doth not relate to a mans sonship or interest in Christ at all. The Spirit may so shine upon any truth, relating to duty, or any other fundamental truth perswading the Divinity of it, upon and unto the soul, and speaking nothing relating to a mans interest in Christ. Neither is the third operation of the Spirit, by which he makes faith boldly draw the conclusion, this witnessing of the Spirit; for that operation is nothing else but influence upon faith, bringing it out to full assurance: but that whereupon this full assurance is drawn or put out, is somewhat deposed and witnessed already. Therefore I conceive the second operation of the Spirit upon the second proposition, and so upon the graces in the man, is that witness of Gods Spirit, that beam of divine light, shining upon those graces, whereby they are made very conspicuous to the understanding: That is the witness, the shining so on them in his witnessing: For only here in this proposition and in this operation, doth the Spirit of God prove a co-witness with our spirit: For, the main thing wherein the witness of our spirit lyeth, is the second proposition, and so the Spirit of God, witnessing with our spirits, is also in that same proposition. So these two witnesses, having deposed and witnessed one and the same thing, *viz.* The truth and reality of such and such graces in the man, which our own spirit or conscience doth depone, according to its knowledge, and the Spirit of the Lord doth certainly affirm and witness to be so. There is a sentence drawn forth,

and

and a conclusion of the mans sonship, by the mans faith, breathed upon by the spirit for that effect, and this conclusion beareth the full assurance of a mans sonship. It may be presumed, that some true Saints do not partake of this all their dayes, as *Heb. 2. 15.*

Tenthly, (I speak with the experience of many Saints, and, I hope, according to Scripture,) If, I say, there is a *communication* of the Spirit of God which is let out to some of his people sometimes; it is somewhat beside, if not beyond that witnessing of a sonship, spoken of before. It is a glorious divine manifestation of God unto the soul, shedding abroad Gods love in the heart; It is a thing better felt than spoken of; It is no audible voice, but it is a glance of glory, filling the soul with God, as he is life, light, love, and liberty, countervailing that audible voice, *O man greatly beloved, Dan. 9. 22, 33.* putting a man in a transport, with this on his heart, *It is good to be here, as Mat. 17. 4.* It is that which went out from Christ to *Mary*, when He but mentioned her name, *John 20. 16.* he had spoken some words to her before, and she understood not that it was he. But when he uttered this one word, *MARY*, there was some admirable divine conveyance and *manifestation* made out unto her heart, by which she was so satisfyingly filled, that there was no place for arguing and disputing, whether or not, that was Christ, and if she had any interest in him. That manifestation made faith to it self, and did purchase credit and trust to it self, and was equivalent with, *Thus saith the Lord.* This is such a glance of glory, that it may in the highest sence, be called the *earnest*, or first fruits of the inheritance: For it is a felt armful of the Holy God, almost wholly conforming the man unto his likeness, so swallowing him up that he forgetteth all things, except the present manifestation: O how glorious is this manifestation of the Spirit! Faith here riseth to so full an assurance, that it re-

solveth wholly into *sensible* embracements of God. This is the thing which doth best deserve the title of *sensible presence*. And, it is like, is not given unto all Believers; some whereof are all their dayes under bondage, and in fear, *Heb. 2. 15.* But here love, almost perfect, casteth out fear. This is so absolutely let out upon the Masters pleasure, and so transient and passing, or quickly gone when it is, that no man may bring his gracious state upon debate for want of it.

Eleventhly, There is a thing we call *Peace*, about which many do vex themselves. This *Peace* is either about a mans *state*, that he is reconciled unto God by Jesus Christ, or it is about his present *case* and condition, that he is walking so, as approved of God, at least, so far, as there is no quarrel or controversie between God and him threatning a stroke. Both of these, are either such in the court of *Scripture*, and consequently in Gods account, or in the court of a mans own *conscience*. Peace, about a mans state, as being in Christ, is sure in the court of Scripture, and of Heaven, when a man doth by Faith close with Christ and the New Covenant, *Rom. 5. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* It Being sure and solid in the court of Scripture, it should hold sure in the court of mans conscience, it being rightly informed; for in that case, it still speaks according to Scripture; but, because often the conscience is misinformed, or in the dark, therefore there is often peace about a mans state according to Scripture, whilst his conscience doth threaten the contrary, and doth still condemn, and refuseth to assail the man, as being reconciled unto God through Christ. In this case the conscience must be informed, and the mans gracious state made out by the marks of grace, as we shewed before; and here the witness of my own spirit, will do much to allay the cry of the conscience; and if the Spirit of the Lord joyn his witness

witness and testimony, the conscience is perfectly satisfied, and proclaimeth peace to the man. The other peace, about a mans present *case* or condition, viz. That it is approved of God in a Gospel sense, it may be wanting, and justly wanting, although the other *peace* about a mans *state* be sure. This peace about a mans case and condition, it is either such in the court of Scripture, and this is when a man is not regarding iniquity, and expecting the Commands of God without exception; then the Scripture saith, he stands in an even place, and he needeth fear no stated quarrel between God and him, in order to a temporary stroke; and when it is thus, his conscience should also assail him that same way; and would do so, if it were rightly informed; but because the conscience is often in the dark, therefore a man may be alarm'd with evil in the court of conscience, as if he were justly to expect a stroke from God because of his sin, and some quarrel God hath at him, although he intends salvation for him; this is enough to keep a man in disquiet, and to inhibit him, the rejoycing allowed unto him, whilst he is walking in his integrity: Therefore a man must here also inform his conscience, and receive no accusations, nor condemnings from it, unless it make them clear by Scripture. At that Bar let every man stand, both about his state, and his condition or case; and let him appeal from all other courts to that, and not receive any indictment but conform to the truth, of God, by which the conscience is to proceed in all things: and if this were well lookt unto, there would not be so many groundless suspicions, amongst the Lords people, either about their state, or condition, upon every thought which entereth their mind.

Twelfthly, There is the *Joy* of the Holy Ghost, and this is when the spirit doth breath upon our rejoycing in God (which is a grace very little in exercise with many) and maketh it set out sensibly and vigorously; and

he exciteth and stirreth the passion of joy and delight in the soul, so as there is an unspeakable and glorious joy in the soul, in the apprehension of Gods friendship and nearness unto him, *1 Pet. 1. 8.* This joy followeth upon peace, and peace followeth righteousness, *Rom. 14. 17.* This joy readily will not fail to be according to the measure of the assurance of Faith, as *1 Pet. 1. 8.* *In whom believing, ye rejoyce, &c.* So that the removal of mistakes about other things, will allay doubts about this.

Now, because some of these excellent communications of the spirit, after they are gone, are brought in question, as delusions of Satan. For vindication of them we say, that the special operations of Gods Spirit in any high degree, usually are communicated to people after such brokenness of Spirit, *Psal. 51. 8.* after so singular pains in Religious duty, *Dan. 9. 3, 21.* or in time of such suffering for righteousness, *1. Pet. 4. 14.* or if they break in as the rain that waiteth not for man, then they do so humble and abase the person, *Isa. 6. 5.* and there are found so many evidences of grace in the man, *Rom. 8. 16.* or these things do so provoke unto holiness, and to have every thing answerable; and conform unto these manifestations of God, *2 Tim. 2. 19.* the person under them doth so loath all things beside Gods friendship and fellowship, *Mat. 17. 4.* and these things do carry on them and with them so much authority, and divine superscription, whilst they are in the Soul, that afterwards they may appear sufficiently to be special communications of God, and singular gracious operations of his spirit, and no delusions of Satan transforming himself unto an Angel of Light, *2 Cor. 11. 14.* nor such common flashes of the spirit, as may admit afterwards irrecoverable Apostacy from God, *Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6.*

Now then, to conclude this part of the work that relateth unto tryal, I say, to all these who complain of the
want

want of the precious out-lettings of the Spirit. 1. Bless God if you want nothing essential for making out of a saving interest in Christ. God hath given unto you Christ Jesus, the greatest gift he had, and since your heart is shapen out for him, he will with him give you all things that are good for you in their seasons. 2. I do believe, upon a right search and tryal, after you have understood the communications of the Spirit, you are not so great a stranger to many things, as you did suspect your self to be. But 3. Remember the promises of life, and of peace with God, are now here in Scripture made unto these special things whereof you alledge the want: The promises are made unto Faith, followed with holiness: And it may be presumed, that many heirs of glory not in this life partake of some of these things, but are in bondage all their dayes through fear of death, *Heb. 2. 15.* so that there should be no mistake about these things we may seek after them, but God is free to give or withhold them. 4. Many do seek after such manifestations, before they give credit by faith unto Gods word; He hath born record that there is life enough for men in Christ Jesus, and if men would by believing set to their seal, that God is true, they should partake of more of these *excellent things*. 5. I may say, many have not honourable apprehensions and thoughts of the spirit of God whose proper work it is, to put out the foresaid noble operations: they do not adore him as God, but vex, grieve, quench, and resist him, and many people complaining of the want of these things, are not at the pains to seek the spirit in his out-goings, and few do set themselves apart for such precious receipts: Therefore be at more pains in Religion, give more credit to his Word, and esteem more highly of the Spirit of God, and so you may find more of these excellent things.

How

How to attain unto
A Saving interest in
C H R I S T.

HAVING in the former part of this Treatise put every mans state to tryal ; It now remains, that in this following part, we give advice to those who neither can, nor dare lay claim to the marks formerly mentioned.

Quest. What shall they do who want the marks of a true and saving interest in Christ, already spoken of, and neither can nor dare pretend unto them ?

Ans. If men miss in themselves the marks of a Saving Interest in Christ, spoken of before : Then it is their duty, and of all that hear this Gospel, personally and heartily to close with Gods Contrivance of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, and this shall secure thy state.

For the better understanding of this, we shall premise some things for information of those who are more ignorant and then speak more directly to the thing. As for the things to be premised,

1. The Lord did at the beginning, out of his bounty, make a Covenant with man in *Adam*, *Gen. 2. 17.* and did enable man to abide in that Covenant, *Eccle. 7. 29.* But man by eating of that forbidden fruit, *Gen. 3.* did break the Covenant, *Hos. 6. 7.* and made it void for ever, *Rom. 2. 20.* involved himself into all misery thereby, *Rom. 5. 12.*

2. The

2. The Lord did most freely, from everlasting purpose and intend to save men another way, *viz.* by Christ Jesus, and the Covenant of grace, in which he intended reconcilement with the Elect, through Christ Jesus (God and Man, born of a woman in due time, to make this agreement effectual.) And this device of satisfying his own justice, and saving of the elect by Christ, he did at first intimate to our parents in Paradise, *Gen. 3. 15.* where he saith, that *the seed of the woman shall bruise the Serpents head* : and the Lord hath in all Generations made this known to his Church.

3. The Lord hath in all ages Covenanted to be the reconciled God of all these ; who by their subjection to his Ordinances, did profess their satisfaction with this device, and oblige themselves to acquiesce in the same, and to seek salvation by Christ Jesus, as God doth offer him in the Gospel : so all the people of *Israel* are called the Lords People, and are said to avouch him to be their God, and he doth avouch them to be his People, *Exod. 19. 5. 8, Deut. 26. 17, 18.* yea, the Lord doth also engage himself to be the God of the seed and children of these who do so subject to his Ordinances. The Covenant is said to be made between God and all the People, young and old, present and not present that day, *Deut. 29. 10, 11. . . 15.* and all are appointed to come under some seal of that Covenant, as was enjoyned to *Abraham, Gen. 7. 10.* not only was it so in the Old Testament, but it is so in the New Testament also. The Lord makes offer of himself, to be our God by Christ Jesus, and the people, professing their satisfaction in that offer, and in Testimony thereof, subjecting themselves unto the Ordinances, they are reckoned a Covenanted people, and are joyned unto his Church in thousands, receiving a seal of the Covenant, without any further particular previous tryal, *Acts. 2. 38. 41.*

4. Many

4. Many do deal treacherously with God in this Covenant, *Psal.* 78. 36, 37. and although they do profess their estimation of Christ the Saviour, and heart-satisfaction with that device of saving sinners by him, and having the Image of God restored by him, in them; yet their heart is not right with God, and they do content themselves with an empty title, of being in a sealed Covenant with God, *John.* 8. 39. *Abraham* is our Father (say they) For although the Lord obligeth every man who professeth his satisfaction with Christ Jesus the devised ransom, to be cordial and sincere herein, and only to these who are so, doth he make out the Spiritual Promises of the Covenant, (they only being privileged to be the Sons of God, who do really receive Christ *John* 1. 12. yet the Lord doth permit many to profess their closing with him in Christ, both in the Old and New Testament, whilst their heart is not engaged; and he doth admit them to be members of his Church, granting unto them the use of Ordinances, and many other external mercies and Privileges denied unto the Heathen who are not in Covenant with him.

5. Although the great part of people do foolishly fancy, that they have closed with God in Christ Jesus sincerely and heartily, or at least, they do without any ground or warrant, promise a new heart to themselves before they depart this life; yet there be but very few, who do really and cordially close with God in Christ Jesus, as is offered in the Gospel; and so there be but very few saved, as is clear, *Mat.* 7. 14. *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be who find it.* *Mat.* 20. 16. *Many are called, but few are chosen.* If people would believe this, it might help to alarm them.

6. Although none at all do cordially close with God in Christ Jesus, and acquiesce in that ransom found out

by God, except only such as are elected, *Rom. 11. 7.* and whose hearts the Lord doth sovereignly determine to that blessed choice, *John 6. 44.* yet the Lord hath left it as a duty upon people who hear this Gospel, to close with his offer of Salvation through Christ Jesus, as if it were in their power to do it. And the Lord, through these Commands and Exhortations (wherein he obligeth men to the thing) doth convey life and strength to the elect, and doth therein convey the new heart unto them, which pointeth kindly toward this new Contrivance of saving sinners, and towards Christ in his Covenant relations; or, it is the Lords mind in these commands and invitations, to put people on some duty, with which he useth to concur, for accomplishing that business between him and them; so then, it is a *coming* on our part, and yet a *drawing* on his part, *John 6. 44.* it is a *drawing* on his part, and running on our part. *Cant. 1. 4.* it is an *approaching* on our part, and yet a *chusing* and *causing* to approach on his part, *Psal. 65. 4.* it is a believing, or *receiving* on our part, *John 1. 12.* and yet it is *given* us to believe, *Phil. 1. 29.*

Having premised these things, I say, if men miss in themselves the marks of a saving interest in Christ, spoken of in the former part of the Treatise; then for securing their state, they are obliged with all diligence personally and heartily to accept of and close with Gods design or contrivance of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, held out in the Gospel. In handling of this, we shall 1. Shew what it is to accept of, and close with that noble invention. 2. We shall shew, that it is the necessary duty of those who would be in favour with God and secure their Souls. 3. What is previously required of those who perform this duty. 4. What are the qualifications and properties of this Duty, if rightly managed. 5. What be the native consequents of it, if it be performed aright.

As for the first, *What is it to close with Gods device*

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of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, held out in the Gospel. Here we must remember (as we shewed before) that a first God willed man to abide in his favour, by holding fast his first integrity in which he was Created; but man by his transgression lost Gods favour, made void the Covenant of Works, and put himself in an utter incapacity to regain the Lords friendship, which he had lost by his sin, and to rescue himself from the curse and wrath now due to him for the same, or any way to procure his own salvation: But the Lord freely hath manifested another way of repairing mans lost estate, viz. by sending his Son Christ Jesus in the flesh to satisfy his justice for the sins of the Elect, and to restore in them his Image now defaced, and to bring them unto glory; and he hath made open Proclamation in the Church.

- *That whosoever will lay aside all thoughts of saving themselves by the Covenant of Works, or inherent righteousness, and will agree heartily to be saved by Christ Jesus; they shall be restored to a better condition, than formerly man was in, and shall be saved.* So then, to close with Gods device of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, is, to quit and forego all thoughts of help or salvation by our own Righteousness, and to agree unto this way which God hath found out; It is to value and highly esteem of Christ Jesus, as the treasure sufficient to enrich poor man, and with the heart to believe this record, *That there is life enough in him for men.* It is to plead this invention, and to acquiesce in it, as the only way to true happiness: It is to point towards this Mediator, as God holdeth him out in the Gospel, with desire to lay the stress of our whole estate on him. This is that which is called Faith or Believing, the receiving of Christ, or believing on his Name, *John 1. 12.* This is that believing on the Name of the Lord Jesus, commanded unto the Jailor for his safety, *Acts 10. 31.* This agreeth to all the descriptions

descriptions of justifying faith in the Scripture, this doth answer the type of *looking to the Brazen Serpent lifted up in the Wilderness*, *John 3. 14, 15.* and this is supposed in all these ordinary actings of Faith; to which, promises are annexed in the Scripture, and will be found in all who have got the new heart from God, and it will be found in none else.

As to the *Second* thing, *viz. That this is the necessary duty of all such who would be in favour with God, and secure their Souls.* It appeareth thus.

1. This closing with Gods contrivance, or believing in Christ, is commanded every where in Scripture by the Lord, as the condition of the new Covenant, giving title and right unto all the spiritual blessings of the same; for it is, upon the matter, the receiving of Christ: This is commanded, whilst God bids men *come and buy*; that is impropiate all, by closing with that contrivement *Isa. 55. 1.* the weary are commanded to come unto him thus for their rest, *Mat. 11. 28. This is his commandment, that we believe on the name of his Son, 1 John 3. 23.* this is enough to prove it a duty incumbent. But further, it is such a duty, as only giveth title and right to a Sonship; for, only they who receive him, are priviledged to be Sons, *John 1. 12. To as many as received him, to them he gave power to be the sons of God, even to such as believed on his name.*

2. It appeareth to be the necessary duty of all, thus: No less than this doth give a meeting unto God, offering himself to be our God in Christ, and no less than this doth answer our profession, as we are in Covenant with him, as Members of his visible Church. The Lord offereth to be our God in Christ; if we do not close with the offer, in laying aside all thoughts of other ways, by which we may attain to happiness, we give no meeting to him; he saith, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well*

well pleased, hear ye him, *Mat. 17. 5.* If we close not with the offer, we give no answer unto God. Moreover, *we are all baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of Sins, Acts 2. 38.* Now unless we close with Christ, as is said, we falsifie that profession; therefore since this is the thing which doth answer Gods offer in the Gospel, and make good our profession, as members of his Church, it is a necessary duty lying upon us.

3. Whatsoever a man hath else, if he do not thus close with Gods Invention about Christ Jesus, and do not receive him, it doth not avail, either as to the accepting of his person, or of his performances, or as to the saving of his soul. Men are accepted only in Christ the beloved, *Eph. 1. 6.* *Abel and his offering are accepted by faith, Heb. 11. 4.* *Without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11. 6.* and, *He that believeth not, is condemned already, and shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him, John 3. 18. 36.* for want of this, no external title doth avail; the Children of the Kingdom are cast out, if this be wanting, *Mat. 8. 10, 11, 12.* The people of *Israel* are like other Heathens, in regard of a graceless state, lying open to the wrath of God, *Jer. 9. 25, 26.* If men do not believe, that he who was slain at *Jerusalem*, who was called Christ Jesus, and witnessed unto by the Prophets, and declared to be the Son of God by many mighty works: I say, if men do not believe that he is the way, and close not with him as the only way, *they shall dye in their sins, John 8. 24.*

We say then, it is a most necessary duty thus to close with *Christ Jesus*, as the blessed relief appointed for sinners; every one who is come to years of understanding, and heareth this Gospel, is obliged to take to heart his own lost condition, and Gods gracious offer of peace and salvation

salvation, through *Christ Jesus*, and speedily to fly from the wrath to come, by accepting and closing with this offer, heartily acquiescing therein, as a satisfying way for saving of poor Sinners: And that all may be the more encouraged to set about this duty, when they hear him praying them to be reconciled unto them, let them remember that peace and salvation is offered to the people in universal terms, to all without exception: *If any man will, he shall be welcome*, Rev. 22. 17. *If any thirst*, (although after that which will never profit) yet *they shall be welcome here*, on the condition aforesaid, *Isa.* 55. 2, 3. all are commanded to believe, *1 John* 3. 23. The promises are to all who are externally called by the Gospel; God excludes none, if they do not exclude themselves, *Acts* 2. 39. so that if any have a mind for the thing, *they may come forward, he will in no wise cast them out*, *John* 6. 37. being able to save to the utmost, *them who come to God through him*, *Heb.* 7. 25. And these who have long delayed to take this matter to heart, had now the more need to look to it, lest what belongs to their peace, be hid from their Eyes: but all these words will not take effect with people, until God pour out his Spirit from on high, *Isa.* 32. 15. to cause men to approach unto God in Christ, yet we must still press mens duty upon them, and beseech and charge them, by the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, and their reckoning to him in that day, that they give the Lord no rest, until he send out that Spirit (which he will give to them who ask it, *Luke* 11. 13.) and cause them to know what belongs unto their peace, and bring them up to their duty.

We come now to speak of the Third thing, (*viz.*) What is previously required of these who are to perform this duty: Men must not rashly, inconsiderately and ignorantly rush in upon this matter, saying, *They will plead*
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that device of saving sinners by Christ, and will acquiesce and rest on him for safety: Often men do deceive themselves here, and do imagine that they have done the thing. We shall therefore hold out some things pre-required in a person, who is to close with Christ Jesus, which although we offer not as positive qualifications; fitting a man for Christ that way, *Isa. 55. 1.* yet they are such things, as without them a man cannot knowingly and cordially perform the duty of believing on Christ Jesus. Beside the common principles which are to be supposed in these who live under Gospel-ordinances, as, *The knowledge that men have immortal souls; Soul and body will be united again at the last day, There is a Heaven and Hell, one of which will be the everlasting Lot of all men; The Old and New Testament is the true Word of God, and the rule of faith and manners; Every man is by nature void of the grace of God, and is an enemy unto God, and an heir of condemnation: Reconciliation is only by the Mediator Christ Jesus; Faith unites unto him, and is the condition of the new Covenant; Holiness is the fruit of true faith, and is to be studied, as that without which no man shall see God: I say, beside these things, the knowledge of which is necessary, it is required of him who would believe on Christ Jesus.*

1. *That he take to heart his natural condition.* And here he must know some things, and also be very serious about them: I say, he must know some things; (1.) That as he was born a Rebel and out-law unto God, so he hath by many actual transgressions disobliged God, and ratified the forfeiture of his favour; yea, a man should know many particular instances of his rebellion on all hands, as that he is a liar, sabbath-breaker, blasphemer, or the like, as *Paul* speaketh very particularly of himself afterward, *1 Tim. 1. 15.* (2.) The man must know, that the wrath of God denounced in Scrip

ture, is standing in force against these very sins whereof he is guilty, and so consequently, he is the party undoubtedly against whom God (who cannot lie) hath denounced war. A man must know, that when the Scripture saith, *Cursed is he that offereth a corrupt thing unto God*, Mal. 1. 14. it speaketh against him for his superficial service performed unto God with the outward man, when his heart was far off. When the word saith, *God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain*, Exod. 20. 7. the man must know it speaketh against himself, who hath often carelessly profained that dreadful name before which all knees should bow, Phil. 2. 10. and which his enemies do take in vain, Psal 139. 20. When the Word saith, *Cursed is he that doth the Work of the Lord negligently*, Jer. 48. 10. the man must know that it speaketh against himself, who hath irreverently, with much wandering of heart, and drowsiness, heard the Word preached; and without sense, faith, or understanding, hath often prayed before him: When the Word saith, *Wo be unto him who giveth his neighbour drink, and hateth his bottle to him, to make him drink also, that he may look on his nakedness*, Hab. 2. 15. 16. the man must know that it is spoken against himself, who hath gloried in making his neighbour drunk, and that dreadful wrath is determined by the Lord against him, according to that Scripture: When the Word saith, *God will judge unclean persons*, Heb. 13. 4. and will shut them out of the new Jerusalem, Rev. 21. 8. the man must know that the Scripture speaketh these words against him, he being an unclean person, so that he is the person against whom the curses of the Law do directly strike. (3.) A man must know that he hath nothing of his own to procure his peace, and to set him free of the hazzard under which he lieth, because *all his righteousness is an unclean thing*, Isa. 64. 6. his prayers, his other service done to

God, his alms-indeed; &c. are not guiltless before God, since they come not from a right principle in his heart, and were not performed in a right way, nor upon a right account, nor for a right end, *his Sacrifices have been an abomination unto God*, Prov. 21. 27. (4.) He must know, that as he is void of all the saving graces of the Spirit, as the true love of God, the true fear of his Name, godly sorrow for sin, &c. so particularly, that he wants Faith in Christ, who taketh burden for all them who believe on him: Until a man know this, he will still leave all his debt and burden without care or regard, at the door of Christ, the common cautioner.

Now not only must a man know these things, as I said before, but must also very seriously take them to heart, that is to say, he must be affected with these things, and be in sad earnest about them, as he useth to be in other cases, wherein he useth to be most serious; yea, he should be more in earnest here, than in other cases, because it is of greater concernment unto him. This seriousness produceth, (1.) A taking of Salvation to heart, more than any thing else. Shall men be obliged to seek first the Kingdom? Mat. 6. 33. Is there but one thing necessary? Luk. 10. 42. Shall Paul count all things loss and dung for this matter? Phil. 3. 8. Is a Man a loser, gaining all the World, if he lose his soul? Mark 8. 36. Shall this be the only ground of joy, that mens names are written in the book of life? Luk. 10. 26. and shall not men (who would be reckoned serious) take their soul and salvation more to heart than any thing else? Surely it cannot fail. Let none deceive themselves. If the hazzard of their soul, and the salvation thereof, and how to be in favour with God, hath not gone nearer to their heart than any thing in the world beside, it cannot be presumed upon just grounds, that they ever knew sin, or the everlastingness of God, or his wrath aright (2.) This serious

ousness breaketh the mans heart, and fainteth the stoutness of it, and leadeth it out to sorrow *as one doth for her first born*: Zech. 12. 10. I grant their sorrow will better suit that Scripture afterwards, when they apprehend Christ pierced by their sins. (3.) It leadeth the man to self-loathing. A man taking up himself so, cannot but loath himself for his abomination, whereby he hath destroyed himself. There is somewhat of that spirit of revenge, which is mentioned as a fruit of true repentance, 1 Cor. 7. 11. (4.) this seriousness doth make the man peremptory to find relief; since it is not in himself, he dare not put off and delay his business, as before: and this is indeed required that he finds himself, so pursued and put to it, that he flees for refuge somewhere. I grant some have a higher, and some a lesser degree of this seriousness, as we shew in the former part of this Treatise. But if we speak of the Lords ordinary way of working with those who are come to age, we say, they must very seriously take their souls estate to heart, despairing of help in themselves, Since the whole need no Physitian, *but those who are sick*, Mat. 9. 12. As for the measure, we plead on that which probably doth suppose, that a man will be induced thereby to transact cordially with Christ, on any terms he doth offer himself to be closed with.

The second thing pre-required of him who would believe on Christ Jesus, is, *He must know and take to heart the way of escape from Gods wrath*; The Spirit must convince him of that righteousness. Here a man must understand somewhat distinctly, that God hath devised a way to save poor lost man by Jesus Christ, whose perfect righteousness hath satisfied offended justice, and procured pardon and everlasting favour to all those whom he perswadeth by his Gospel, to accept of Gods offer. Acts 13. 38, 39. John. 1. 12. So that no person is excluded of whatsoever rank or condition, whatsoever hath

been his former way (unless he be guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is, a malicious hatred and rejection of the remedy appointed for sinners, as we shall hear) for, all manner of sin is given unto those who accept of the offer in Gods way, *Matth. 12. 13.* He is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God through him, *Heb. 7. 25.*

The third thing pre-required is, *A man must know that as God hath not excluded him, from the relief appointed; so he is willing to be reconciled unto men through Christ, and hath obliged men to close with him through Christ Jesus, and so to impropriate that salvation to themselves.* He not only invites all to come, *Isa. 55. 1, 2.* And welcometh all that come, as we find in the Gospel, and commendeth those who come, *Matth. 8. 10. and 15. 28.* and chideth for not coming and closing with him, *Joh. 3. 18.* But also he commandeth all to believe on Christ, *1 John 3. 23.* So as a man is not to question the Lords willingness to receive men, who go to Christ honestly, for God hath abundantly cleared that in Scripture; unless that a man know so much, he will scarcely dare to lay his heart open for that noble device of saving sinners, or adventure his own weight and stress upon Christ Jesus.

The fourth thing pre-required, is, *The man who would close with Christ Jesus, must resolve to break all Covenants with Hell and death, Isa. 28. 15.* Whatsoever known evil men are engaged into, they must resolve to forego it; for there is no concord between Christ and Belial, *2 Cor. 6. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.* The Lord requireth that they who would expect him to be for them, should not be for another, *Hos. 3. 3.* This is far from Evangelick repentance, which (I grant) doth not precede a mans closing with Christ by faith; there is little here beyond a mis-regard of these things unto which a man was formerly devoted, and a slighting what he was mad upon, because

because he seeth himself destroyed thereby, and relief now offered, whereupon his heart beginneth to be more intent than formerly it was. After this, when Christ is lookt upon alone, his worth and beauty doth appear, so as among all the gods there is none like unto him, and he looketh out as a sufficient covering of the eyes to all who get him. Upon which the heart loveth Gods device in the new Covenant, and loveth to lay its weight upon Christ, rather than any other way, bending towards him, and so the man becometh a believer. Now I will not say that all these things whereof we have spoken, are formally, orderly and distinctly found in every person before he close with God in Christ; for the way of the heart with Christ, may be added to the four wonderful things, *Prov. 18. 19.* It is hard to trace the heart in its translation from darkness to light; yet we hold out the most ordinary and likely way, to him who doth ask the way, debarring thereby ignorant and senseless persons from meddling, and discharging them to pretend to any interest in him whilst they remain such.

The fourth thing we propose to speak to, is, *The properties of this duty, when rightly gone about.* I shall only hint a few.

1. *Believing in Christ must be Personal*; a man himself, and in his own proper person must close with Christ Jesus. *The just shall live by his faith? Heb. 2. 4.* This faith, that it will not suffice; for a mans safety and relief, that he is in Covenant with God, as a born member of the visible Church by vertue of the parents subjection to Christs Ordinances, neither will it suffice that the person had the *initiating seal of Baptism* added, and that he then virtually engag'd to seek salvation by Christs blood, as all infants do. Neither doth it suffice *that men are come of believing parents*; their faith will not instate their children into a right to the spiritual blessings of the

Covenant. Neither will it suffice *that parents did in some respect engage for their children, and give them away unto God*; all these things do not avail. The children of the kingdom and of godly predecessors are cast out; unless a man in his own person, put out faith in Christ Jesus, and with his own heart please and acquiesce in that device of saving sinners, he cannot be saved. I grant this faith is given unto him by Christ: but certain it is, that it must be personal.

2. This duty must be *cordial* and hearty: *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*, Rom. 10. 10. A man must be sincere, and without guile in closing with Christ, judging him the only covering of the eyes, not hankering after another way. The matter must not swim only in the head or understanding, but it must be in the heart; the man not only must be perswaded that Christ is the way, but affectionately perswaded of it, loving and liking the thing, having complacency in it; so that it is all a mans desire, as *David* speaketh of the Covenant, 2 Sam. 23. 5. If a man be cordial and affectionate, in any thing, surely he must be so here, in this one thing necessary: It must not be simply a fancy in the head, but it must be a heart-business, a soul-business; yea, not a business in the outer court of affections, but in the flower of affections, and in the innermost Cabinet of the soul, where Christ is formed. Shall a man be cordial in any thing, and not in this, which doth comprize all his chief interests, and his everlasting state within it? Shall the Lord be said to rejoyce over a man, as a Bridegroom rejoyceth over his Bride, Isa. 62. and to rest in his love with joy, Zeph. 3. 17. and shall not the heart of man go out and meet him here? the heart or nothing; love, or nothing: Marriage love, which goeth from heart, to heart; love of espousals, or nothing: Prov. 23. 26. 1 Cor. 13. 2. I will not say that there is in all as soon

as they believe, a prevailing sensible love, which maketh sick ; but there must be in believing, a rational and kindly love, so well grounded, and deeply engaging, that many waters cannot quench it ; It is strong as death, and jealousy in it, burneth as fire, *Cant.* 8. 6, 7.

The third property, or qualification of believing as it goeth out after Christ, it must be *rational*.

Hereby I mean, that the man should move towards God in Christ, in knowledge and understanding, taking up Gods device of saving sinners by Christ, as the Scripture doth hold it out, no fancying a Christ to himself, other-ways than the Gospel speaketh of him, nor another way of relief by him, than the word of God holdeth out. Therefore we find knowledge joyned to the Covenant between God and man as a requisite, *Jer.* 24. 7. & *31.* 34. I mean here also, that a man be in calmness of spirit, and as it were, in his cold blood in closing with Christ Jesus, not in a simple fit of affection which soon vanisheth : *Mat.* 13. 20. nor in a distemper through some outward distress, as the people were, *Psal.* 78 34. and proved not stedfast in the Covenant ; not under a temptation of some outward temporary interest, as *Simon Magus* was when he believed, *Acts* 8. A man must act here rationally, as being Master of himself, in some measure able to judge of the good or evil of the thing as it stands before him.

The fourth is, Faith as it goeth out rationally, so it goeth out *resolutely*. The poor distressed people in the Gospel did most resolutely cast themselves upon Christ. This resoluteness of spirit, is in order to all difficulties that lye in the way : Violence is offered to these. The man whose heart is a shaping out for Christ Jesus, cannot say, There is a Lion in the street, *Prov.* 26. 13. If he cannot have access by the door he will break through the roof of the house, with that man, *Luk* 5. 19. He often

ten doth not regard that which the World calleth discretion or prudence, like *Zacheus* climbing upon a tree to see Christ, when faith was breeding in his bosome. *Luke. 19.* This resoluteness of spirit looketh towards what inconveniences may follow, and waveth all these at least resolving over all these, like a wise builder who reckoneth the expence before-hand, *Luke 14. 28.* This resoluteness is also in order to all a mans Idols, and such weights as would easily beset him, if he did not bend after Christ over them all, like that blind man who did cast his garments from him when Christ called him, *Mark. 10. 50.* This resoluteness in the soul, proceedeth from desperate self-necessity within the man, *Ab. 16. 30.* And from the sovereign command of God obliging the man to move towards Christ, *1 John 3. 23.* and from the good report gone abroad of God, that he putteth none away that come unto him through Christ, *John 6. 37.* but doth commend such as do adventure over the greatest difficulties, *Mat. 15. 28.* But above all, this resoluteness doth proceed from the arm of *Jehovah*, secretly and strongly drawing the sinner towards Christ, *Joh. 6. 44.* I will not say that every one, cloistering with Christ in the offers of the Gospel, hath all the foresaid thoughts formally in his mind; yet, upon search, it will be found, if he be put to it, or put in mind of these things, they are then aloft in the soul.

By what is said, it doth manifestly appear that many in the visible Church had need to do somewhat further for securing of their souls, when they come to years of discretion, than is found to have been done by them before in the Covenant between God and the Church, sealed to them in Baptism. By what is said also, there is a competent guard upon the free grace of God in the Gospel, held out through Christ Jesus; so as ignorant, senseless, profane men, cannot with any shadow of reason pretend

to an interest in it. It is true, believing in Christ, and closing with him as a perfect Saviour, seemeth easie; and every godless man saith, that he believeth on him: But they deceive themselves, since their soul hath never cordially, rationally, and resolutely gone out after Christ Jesus, as we have said. It may be some wicked men have been enlightened, *Heb. 6. 4.* and have found some motion in their fear, *Act. 24. 25.* or in their joy; *Mat. 13. 20. Mark 6. 20.* But not having engaged their heart in approaching to God, *Jer. 30. 21.* have either sitten down in that common work, as their sanctuary, until the tryal came, *Mat. 13. 20, 21.* or they return back with the Dog to their vomit, from which they had in some measure escaped by the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, *2 Pet. 2. 20, 21, 22.* or they utterly fall away to the hatred and malicious despising and persecuting of Christ and his interests; from whence hardly can they be recovered, *Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6.* and *10. 26, 29.* which thing should provoke men to be serious, in this great business.

We come now to speak to the fifth thing proposed, and that is, *What be the native consequents of true believing,* I shall reduce what I will speak of them to these two, viz. *Union with God, and Communion with him.*

First then, I say, when a sinner closeth with Christ Jesus, as is said, *there is presently an admirable union, strange oneness, between God and the man.* As the Husband and wife, head and body, root and branches, are not to be reckoned two, but one; So Christ, or God in Christ, and the sinner closing with him by faith, are one, *Eph. 5. 30, 32.* He that is so joyned unto the Lord is one Spirit, *1 Cor. 6. 17.* *As the Father is in the Son, and Christ in the Father; so believers are one in the Father and the Son.* They are one, as the Father and the Son are one: the Father in Christ, and Christ in believers, that

that they may be made perfect in one. O what a strange inter-weaving, and indissoluble knot is there! *Joh. 17. 21, 22, 23, 26.* Because of this union between God and the believer, 1. They can never hate one another, henceforth the Lord will never hate the believer: *As no man hateth his own flesh at any time, but cherisheth it and nourisheth it, so doth Christ his people, Eph. 5. 29.* He may be angry, so as to correct and chastise the man that is a believer, but all he doth to him, is for his good and advantage; *all the Lords paths must be mercy and truth to him, Psal. 35. 10. All things must work together for good to him, Rom. 8. 28.* On the other side, the believer can never hate God maliciously; for, *he that is born of God sinneth not, 1 Joh. 3. 9.* For the Lord hath resolved and ordained things so, that his hand shall undoubtedly so be upon all believers for good, that they shall never get leave to hate him, and be so pluckt out of his hands.

2. Because of this union, there is ~~a~~ a strange sympathy and fellow-feeling between God and the believer: The Lord is afflicted with the mans afflictions; he doth tenderly, carefully, and seasonably resent it, as if he were afflicted with it, *Isa. 63. 9.* He who toucheth the believer, toucheth the apple of the Lords eye, *Zeck. 2. 8. He is touched with the feeling of their infirmities, Heb. 4. 15. And precious in his sight is their blood, Psal. 116. 15.* In a word, what is done to them, is done unto him; and what is done unto them, is not done unto him, *Mat. 10. 40. & 25. 40, 45.* On the other part, the zeal of his house sitteth in the heart of the believer, *Psal. 69. 9.* The Lords reproach lighteth on the believer, if it go well with his affairs, that is the business of his people. So there is a strange sympathy between God and believers, all by vertue of the union between them; because of which, men should hate every thing which would compete with him in their love, or affections; and should disdain to be

slaves

slaves to the Creatures, since these are the servants of their Lord and Husband, and their servants through him. What a hateful thing is it for a Queen to whore with the servants of her Prince and Husband? It is also a shame for a Believer to be afraid of evil tidings, since the Lord, with whom he is one, alone ruleth all things, and doth whatsoever pleaseth him in Heaven and in Earth, *1 Cor.* 3. 21, 23. *Psal.* 112. 6, 7. and 115. 3.

The other great consequent of believing, is an admirable unpararell'd *communion*: by vertue whereof, 1. The parties themselves do belong each to other: The Lord is the God of his people, he himself, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is their God, in all his glorious Attributes: his justice, as well as his mercy; his wisdom, power, holiness, &c. for *He becometh the God of his people*, as he often speaketh in the Covenant. On the other part, the Believers are his people: in their very persons they are his, as the Covenant doth speak; *They shall be his people*; their head, their heart, their hand, &c. whatsoever they are, they are his. 2. By vertue of this communion, they have a mutual interest in one anothers whole goods and geer, in as far as can be useful. All the Lords Word doth belong to the Believer: Threatnings as well as Promises, for their good; all his wayes, all his works of all sorts, special communications, death, devils, even all things, in so far as can be useful. *1. Cor.* 3. 21, 22, 23. On the other side, all which belongeth to the Believer, is the Lords; heritage, children, life, wife, credit, all is at his disposing; if any of these can be useful to him, the Believer is to forego them, else he falsifieth that communion, and declareth himself in so far, unworthy of Christ, *Luke* 14. 26. 3. By vertue of this communion, there should be much familiarity between God and the Believer. The Lord may meddle with any thing which doth belong to the believer, and do to him
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what seemeth good to him, and the man is not to mistake, or say unto God, What dost thou? (but in so far as concerneth his duty) yes, he is still to say in every case, Good is the Word and Will of the Lord, *Isa.* 38. 8. 2. *Kings.* 4. 23, 26. On the other part, the believer may in an humble way, be free and familiar with God in Christ; he may *come with boldness to the throne of Grace*, and not use a number of complements in his addresses unto God, *Heb.* 4. 16. *For he is no more a stranger unto God*, *Eph.* 2. 19. so as that he needs not speak unto God, as one that hath acquaintance to make every hour, as many professors do, and it maketh a huge inconsistency in their Religion. The believer also may lay open all his heart unto God, *1. Sam.* 1. 15. and impart all his secrets unto him, and all his tentations without fear of a mistake. The believer also may enquire into what God doth, in so far as may concern his own duty, or in so far as may ward off mistakes of the Lords way, and reconcile it with his Word, *John* 13. 15. The believer is a friend in this respect, as knowing what the Master doth, see *Gen.* 18. 23. *Eccl.* 12. 1. *Isa.* 63. 17. The believer also may be free with God, to go in daily with his fallings, and seek repentance, pardon and peace through Christs Advocateship, *Acts.* 5. 31. *1 John* 2. 1. O how often in one day may the believer plead pardon, if he intend not to mock God, or to turn grace into wantonness! The Lord hath commanded men to forgive seventy times seven in one day, and hath hinted therein a parable, how much more the Master will forgive, *Mat.* 18. 22, 28. The believer also may be free to entrust God with all his outward concernments, for he doth care for these things, *Mat.* 6. 30, 32. *1 Pet.* 5. 7. Yea, the believer may humbly put God to it, to make him forth-coming for him, in all cases, as beseemeth, and to help him to suitable fruit in every season, even grace in time of need.

Heb. 4.

Heb. 4. 16. Yea, how great things may believers seek from him in Christ Jesus, both for themselves and others, *1 John 5. 14, 15. John 14. 13. Isa. 45. 11.* It is the shame and great prejudice of his people, that they do not improve that communion with God more than they do; Christ may justly upbraid them, that they ask nothing in his Name, *John, 16. 24.*

By what is said, it doth appear of how great consequence this duty of believing is, by which a man closeth with Christ Jesus, whom the Father hath sealed, and given for a Covenant to the people. It is so honourable for God, answering his very design, and serving his interest in the whole contrivment and manifestation of the Gospel: And it is so advantageous to men, that Satan and an evil heart of unbelief, do mightily oppose it, by moving objections against it. I shall hint some most ordinary.

Object. I am so base, worthless and faithless of my self, that I think it were high presumption for me to meddle with Christ Jesus, or the salvation purchased at the rate of his blood.

Ans. It is true, all the Children of Adam are base and vile before him who chargeth his Angels with folly, Job. 4. 18. All Nations are less than nothing and vanity before him, Isa. 40. 17. There is such a disproportion between God and men, that unless he himself had devised that Covenant, and of his own free will had offered so to transact with men, it had been high treason for men or Angels to have imagined, that God should have humbled himself, and become a servant, and have taken on our nature, and have united it by a personal union to the blessed God-head: and that he should have subjected himself to the shameful death of the Cross; and that this, that men, who were rebels, should be reconciled unto God, and be made eternally happy, by being in his holy company for ever. But I say, all that was his own

own device and free choice : Yea, moreover, if God had not sovereignly commanded men so to close with him in and through Christ, *Isa.* 55. 1, 2, 3. *Mat.* 11. 28. *Joh.* 3. 23. *2 Cor.* 5. 10. no man durst have made use of that device of his. So then, although with *Abigale* I may say, let me be but a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord, *1 Sam.* 25. 41. Yet since he hath in his holy wisdom devised that way, and knoweth how to be richly glorified in it, *Ephes.* 1. 18. *John* 17. 10. and hath commanded me, as I shall be answerable, in the great day, to close with him in Christ, as is said : I dare not disobey, nor enquire into the reasons of his contrivements and commands, but must adventure on the business, as I would not be found to frustrate the grace of God, and in a manner disappoint the Gospel, *Gal.* 2. 21. and falsifie the record which God hath born of his Son, that there is Life enough in him for Men *1 John* 5. 10. 11. and so make God a lyar, and add that rebellion to all my former transgressions.

Object. *I am a person singularly sinful, beyond any I know ; Therefore I dare not presume to go near unto Christ Jesus, or look after that salvation which is through his righteousness.*

Ans. Is your sin beyond the drunkenness and incest of *Lot* ? adultery, covered with Murder, in *David* ? Idolatry, and horrid Apostacy in *Solomon* ? Idolatry, Murder, and Witchcraft in *Manasseh* ? anger against God, and his way in *Jonah* ? forswearing of Christ in *Peter*, after he was forewarned, and had vowed the contrary ; bloody persecution in *Paul*, making the Saints to blaspheme ? &c. (now wo to him who is imboldned to stir by these instances recorded in Scripture, and adduce here to the commendation of the free and rich grace of God, and to encourage poor penitent sinners to fly unto Christ) I say, are your sins beyond these ? Yet all the

obtain

obtained pardon through Christ, as the Scripture doth shew. Know therefore, that all sins do lye alike level before the free grace of God, who loveth freely, *Hos.* 14. 4. and looketh not to less or more sin: If the person have a heart to come unto him through Christ, then he is able to save to the utmost, *Heb.* 7. 25. Yea, it is more provoking before God, not to close with Christ, when the offer cometh to a man, than all the rest of his transgressions are: for, *He that believeth not, hath made God a liar, in that record he hath born of life in the Son: and he who doth not believe, shall be condemned for not believing on the Son of God;* that shall be the main thing in his indictment, *John* 3. 18. So that much sin cannot excuse a man, if he scare at Christ, and shift his offer, since God hath openly declared, that this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, *Christ came to save sinners whereof I am chief:* Even he who is chief of sinners in his own apprehension, is bound to believe and accept this saying, *1 Tim.* 1. 15.

Object. My sins have some aggravating circumstances beyond the same sins in other persons, which do much terrifie me.

Answer. What can the aggravations of thy sins be, which are not parallell'd in the fore-cited examples; Is thy sin against Great Light? So behooved many of these we spake of before. Was it against singular mercies and deliverances? So was that of *Lot* and *Noah's* drunkenness. Was thy sin done with much deliberation? So was *David's* whilst he wrote the letter against *Uriah*. Was it against, or after any singular manifestation of God? So was *Solomon's*. Was it by a small and despicable temptation? So was that of *Jonah*, and of *Peter*, if we consider the hainousness of their transgression. Hast thou reiterated the sin, and committed it over again? So did *Lot*, so did *Peter*, so did *Jehosaphat* in joyning with *Ahab*

and *Jehoriam*; 1 *Kings* 22. 2 *Kings* 3. Are there many gross sins concurring together in thee? So were there in *Manasseh*. Hast thou stood long out in Rebellion? (that, as all the former, is thy shame: but) so did the thief on the Cross, he stood it out to the last gasp, *Luke* 23. 42. If yet thou hast an ear to hear, thou art commanded to hear, *Mat.* 13. 19. Although thou hast long spent thy money for that which is not bread; *Isa.* 55. 1. 2. Thou hast the greater need now to haste, and to flee for refuge; and if thou do so, he shall welcome thee, and in no wayes cast thee out, *John* 6. 37. especially, since he hath used no prescription of time in Scripture. So that all those aggravations of thy sin will not excuse thy shifting off the Lords offer.

Object. In all these instances given, you have not named the particulars whereof I am guilty: Nor know I any who ever obtained mercy before God, being guilty of such things as are in me.

Ans. It is hard to condescend upon every particular transgression which may vex the conscience; yea, lesser sins than some of those I have mentioned, may hugely disquiet, if the Lord blow the fire. But, for thy satisfaction, I shall condescend upon some truths of Scripture, which do reach sins and cases more universally, than any man can do particularly. See *Exod.* 34. 7. God pardoneth iniquity, transgression and sin: that is, all manner of sin, *Ezek.* 18. 21, 22, 30. If a man turn from all his wickedness, it shall no more be remembered, or prove his ruine, *Job.* 6. 37. Him that cometh, he will in no wayes cast out; that is, whatsoever be his sins, or aggravations of them, *John* 3. 16. *Whosoever believeth shall be saved*; that is, without exception of any sin, or any case, *Heb.* 7. 25. He is able to save to the utmost those who come to God through him: no man can sufficiently declare what is Gods uttermost, *Mat.* 12. 31.

manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, that is, there is no sort of sin, whereof one instance shall not be forgiven in one person or other, except the sin against the Holy Ghost. These, and the like Scriptures, do carry all sorts of sin before them; so that, let thy sins be what they will, or can be, they may be suuk in one of these two truths, so as thy sin can be no excuse to thee for shifting the offer of peace and salvation through Christ, since any man who *will*, is allowed to come and take, Rev. 22. 17. we will not multiply words. The great God of Heaven and Earth, hath sovereignly commanded all who see their need of relief, to betake themselves unto Christ Jesus, and to close cordially with Gods device of saving sinners by him, laying aside all objections and excuses, as they shall be answerable unto him in the day he shall judge the quick and the dead, and shall drive away out of his presence all these who would dare to say, their sins and condition were such, as that they durst not adventure upon Christs perfect Righteousness for their relief, notwithstanding of the Lords own command often interposed, and in a manner, his credit engaged.

Object. I suspect I am guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, and so am incapable of pardon, and therefore I need not think of believing on Christ Jesus for saving of my Soul.

Ans. Although none should charge this sin on themselves, or on others, unless they can prove the charge according to Christs example, Matth. 12. 25, 26, 32. for satisfying of the doubt, I shall, 1. Shew what is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, properly so called, because there be some gross sins which people do unwarily judge to be this unpardonable sin. 2. I shall shew what is the sin against the Holy Ghost. 3. I shall draw some conclusions in answer directly to the objection.

As for the First, There be many gross sins, which although (as all other sins) may be sins against the Holy Ghost,

Ghost, who is Gods equal and one with the Father and the Son, and are done against some of his operations and motions, yet are they not the *sin against the Holy Ghost* which is the unpardonable sin. As, first, blaspheming of God, under bodily tortures, is not that sin, for some Saints fell into this, *Acts 26. 11.* much less, blaspheming of God in a fit of distraction, or frenzy, for a man is not a free rational agent at that time; and he that spareth his people as a Father doth the Son that served him, and doth pity, so *Mal. 3. 17. Psal. 103. 13.* doth he spare and pity in these roivings; For so would our Fathers according to flesh do, if we blasphemed them in a fit of distraction; much less are horrid blasphemies against God, darted in upon the soul, and not allowed there, this unpardonable sin; for such things were offered to Christ, *Mat. 4.* and are often cast in upon the Saints.

2. The hating of good in others, whilst I am not convinced that it is good, but in my light do judge it to be evil; yea, the speaking against it, yea, the persecuting of it in that case, is not the sin against the Holy Ghost; for all these will be found in *Paul* before he was converted, and he obtained Mercy, because he did these things ignorantly.

3. Heart-rising at the thriving of others in the work and way of God, whilst I love it in my self; yea, the rising of heart against providence, which often expresseth it self against the creatures nearest our hand; yea, this rising of heart entertained, and maintained (although they be horrid things, leading towards that unpardonable sin, yet) are not that sin; for these may be in the Saints, proceeding from self-love, which cannot endure to be darkned by another, and proceeding from some cross in their Idol under a fit of temptation; the most part of all this was in *Jonah*, *Jonah 4. 4.* Not only are not decays in what was once in the man, and falling into gross sins against Light, after the receiving of

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the truth, this unpardonable sin (for then many of all the Saints in Scripture were undone) but further, Apostacy from much of the truth is not that sin ; for that was in *Solomon*, and in the Church of *Corinth* and *Galatia* ; yea, denying, yea, forswearing of the most fundamental truth under a great tentation, is not this sin, for then *Peter* had been undone. 5. As resisting, quenching, grieving and vexing of the Spirit of God by many sinful wayes, are not this unpardonable sin, for they are charged with these who are called to repentance in Scripture, and not shut out, as guilty of this sin : So neither reiterating sin against light, is the sin against the Holy Ghost, although it leadeth towards it, for such was *Peters* sin in denying Christ ; so was *Jehosaphats* sin in joyning with *Abab* and *Jehoram*. 6. Purposes and essays of self-murder, and even purposes of murdering godly men, (the party being under a sad fit of tentation) yea, actual self-murder, (although probably it often joyneth in the issue with this unpardonable sin, which ought to make every soul look upon the very tentation to it with horreur and abhorrency, yet) is not the sin against the Holy Ghost ; The Jaylor intended to kill himself upon a worse account than many poor people do in the sight and sense of Gods wrath, and of their own Sin and Corruption ; yet that Jaylor obtained pardon *Acts*. 16. 27. 34. And *Paul* before his effectual calling, was accessory unto the murder of many Saints, and intended to kill more, as himself granteth, *Acts* 26. 9. 10 13. Although all these are dreadful sins, each of them deserving wrath everlasting, and not being repented of, bringeth endless vengeance, especially the last cuts off hope of relief, for ought can be expecting in an ordinary way, yet none of these is the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost ; and so under any of these, *There is hope to him that bath an ear to hear the joyful sound of the Covenant ; All manner of*

such sin and blasphemy may be forgiven, as is clear in the Scripture, where these things are mentioned.

As for the second thing. Let us see what the sin against the Holy Ghost is. It is not a simple act of transgression, but a complex, of many mischievous things, involving Soul and Body ordinarily in guilt. We thus describe it; *It is a rejecting and opposing of the Chief Gospel Truth, and way of Salvation, made out singularly to a man by the Spirit of God in the truth and good thereof, and that avowedly, freely, wilfully, maliciously and despightfully, breeding hopeless fear.* There be three places of Scripture, which do speak most of this sin, and thence we will prove every part of this description, in so far as may be useful to our present purpose, by which it will appear that none who have a mind for Christ, need stumble at what is spoken of this sin in Scripture, See *Mat. 12. 24. --- 32. Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6. and 10. 25, --- 29.* First then, let us consider the Object about which this sin, or sinful acting of the man guilty thereof, is conversant, and that is the chief Gospel-truth, and way of Salvation: both which run to one thing. It is the way which God hath contrived for saving of sinners by Jesus Christ the promised *Messiah* and Saviour; by whose death and righteousness men are to be saved, as he hath held forth in the Ordinances; confirming the same by many mighty works in Scripture tending thereto. This *way* of salvation is the Object. The *Pharisees* oppose this, that Christ was the *Messiah*, *Mat. 12. 23, 24.* The wrong is done against the Son of God, *Heb. 6. 6,* and the blood of the Covenant, and the Spirit graciously offering to apply these things, *Heb. 10. 29.* Secondly, In the description, consider the qualification of this object. It is singularly made out to the party by the Spirit of God, both in the *truth* and *good* thereof. This faith, 1. That there must be knowledge of the truth and way of Salvation. The *Pharisees*

Pharisees knew that Christ was the heir, *Mat. 21. 38.* The party hath knowledge, *Heb. 10. 26. 2.* That knowledge of the thing, must not swim only in the head, but there must be some half heart-perswasion of it. Christ knew the Pharisees thoughts, and so did judge them, *Mat. 12. 25.* and that the contrary of what they spake was made out upon their heart: There is a tasting, *Heb. 6. 4, 5.* which is beyond simple enlightning; yea, there is such a perswasion ordinarily as leadeth to a deal of outward sanctification, *Heb. 10. 29. 3.* This perswasion must not only be of the verity of the thing, but of the good of it. The party tasteth the good Word of God, and he apprehendeth the thing as eligible; *Heb. 6. 5. 4.* This perswasion is not made out only by strength of Argument, but also by an enlightning work of Gods Spirit, shining on the truth, and making it conspicuous. Therefore is that sin called *the sin against the Holy Ghost*, *Mat. 12. Mark 3.* The persons are said to have received the Holy Ghost, *Heb. 6. 4.* and to do despight unto the spirit of grace, who was in the nearest step of a gracious operation with them, *Heb. 10. 29.* Thirdly, In this description, consider the acting of the party against the object so qualified, It is a rejecting and opposing of it: which importeth, 1. That men have once, some way at least been in hands with it, or had the offer of it, as is true of the Pharisees. 2. That they do reject, even with contempt, what they had of it, or in their offer. The Pharisees deny it, and speak disdainfully of Christ, *Mat. 12. 24.* They fall away, intending to shame Christ, *Heb. 6. 5, 6.* 3. The men set themselves against it by the spirit of persecution, as the Pharisees did still. They rail against it: Therefore it is called *Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, *Mat. 12. 24. 31.* They would Crucifie Christ again, if they could, *Heb. 6. 6.* They are Adversaries, *Heb. 10. 27.* Fourthly, consider the properties

of this acting. 1. It is *vouched*, that is, not seeking to shelter or hide it self. The Pharisees speak against Christ publickly, *Mat. 12. 24.* They would have Christ brought to an open shame, *Heb. 6. 6.* They forsake the Ordinances which favour that way, *and 10. 25.* and despise the danger: For, looking for indignation, they trample that blood still, *Heb. 10. 27, 29.* 2. The party acteth *freely*, it is not from unadvisedness, nor from force or constraint, but an acting of free choice; nothing doth force the Pharisees to speak against and persecute Christ. They Crucifie to *themselves*, they re-act the murder of their own free accord, and in their own bosome, none constraining them, *Heb. 6. 6.* They sin of free choice, as the word is, *spontaneously*, *Heb. 10. 27. 3.* It is acted *willfully*. They are so resolute, they will not be dissuaded by any offer, or the most precious means, as is clear in the aforesaid Scriptures. 4. It is done *maliciously*, so as it proceeds not so much, if at all, from a temptation to pleasure, profit, or honour; It proceedeth not from fear, or force, or from any good end proposed; but out of heart-malice, against God and Christ, and the Advancement of his Glory and Kingdom. So that it is the very nature of Satans sin, who hath an irreconcilable hatred against God, and the remedy of sin, 'because his glory is thereby advanced. This is a special ingredient in this sin. The Pharisees are found guilty of heart-malice against Christ, since they spake so against him, and not against their own children casting out Devils; and this is the force of Christs Argument, *Mat. 12. 27.* They do their utmost to Crucifie Christ again, and to bring him to an open shame. *Heb. 6. 6.* They are adversaries like the Devil, *Heb. 10. 27. 5.* It is done *despightfully*. The malice must bewray it self. The Pharisees must proclaim that Christ hath correspondence with Devils, *Mat. 12.* He must be put to an open shame, and crucified

cified again, *Heb. 6.* they must tread under foot that blood, and do despite to the Spirit; *Heb. 10. 29.* so that the party had rather perish a thousand times, than be in Christs debt for salvation. The last thing in the description, is, the ordinary attendant or consequence of this sin, it breedeth *Desperate and Hopeless fear.* They fear him, whom they hate, with a slavish, hopeless fear, such as Devils have, *Heb. 10. 27.* They know that God will put out his power against them; they tremble in the remembrance of it; and if they could be above him, and destroy him, they covet it; and since they cannot reach that, they hate with the utmost of heart-malice, and do persecute him, and all that is his with despite.

As for the third thing proposed. (*viz.*) The *Conclusions* to be drawn from what is said, whereby we will speak directly to the Objection, 1. As I hinted before, since the sin against the Holy Ghost is so remarkable, and may be well known where it is, none should charge themselves with it, unless they can prove and make good the charge; for it is a great wrong done unto God, to labour to perswade my soul that he will never pardon me; It is the very way to make me desperate, and to lead me unto the unpardonable sin; Therefore unless thou canst and darest say, that thou dost hate the way which God hath devised for saving of sinners, and dost resolve to oppose the thriving of his Kingdom, both with thy self and others, out of malice and despite against God, thou oughtest not to suspect thy self guilty of this sin. 2. Whatsoever thou hast done against God, if thou dost repent it, and wish it were undone, thou canst not be guilty of this sin; for in it, heart-malice and despight against God do still prevail. 3. If thou art content to be his debtor for pardon, and wouldest be infinitely obliged unto him for it, then thou canst not in
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that case be guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost ; for, as we shewed before, they who are guilty of it, do so despite God, that they would not be his debtors for salvation. 4. Whatsoever thou hast done, if thou hast a desire after Jesus Christ, and dost look with a desiring after him, and canst not think of parting with his Blessed Company for ever : Or if thou must part with him, yet dost wish well to him, and all his, thou needest not suspect thy self to be guilty of this unpardonable sin ; For there can be no such hatred of him in thy bosome, as is necessarily required to make up that sin. 5. If thou wouldest be above the reach of that sin, and secure against it for ever, then go work upon thy heart to plead salvation by Christ Jesus, and to close with God in him, acquiescing in him as the sufficient ransome and rest, as we have been pressing before, and yield to him to be saved in his way : Do this in good earnest, and thou shalt be for ever put out of the reach of that ugly thing where-with Satan doth affright so many poor seekers of God.

Object. Although I be not excluded from the benefit of the New Covenant, yet it is not in my power to believe on Christ ; For Faith is the gift of God, and above the strength of flesh and blood.

Ans. It is true, that saving Faith, by which alone a man can heartily close with God in Christ, is above our power, and is the gift of God, as we said before in the premises : Yet remember, 1. The Lord hath left it as a Duty upon all who hear this Gospel, cordially by faith to close with his offer of salvation through Christ, as is clear in the Scripture ; And you must know, that although it be not in our power to perform that duty of our selves, yet the Lord may justly condemn for not performing of it, and we are inexcusable, because at first he made men perfectly able to do whatsoever he should command. 2. The Lord commanding this thing, which is above our power, willeth

willeth us to be sensible of our inability to do the thing, and would have us putting on him to work it in us : He hath promised to give the new heart, and he hath not excluded any from the benefit of that promise. 3. The Lord useth by these Commands and Invitations, and mens meditation on the same, and their supplication about the thing, to convey power unto the soul to perform the duty : Therefore, for answer to the objection, I do beseech thee in the Lords Name, to lay to heart these his Commandments and Promises ; and meditate on them, and upon that blessed business of the New Covenant, and pray unto God as you can, over them, (for he will be enquired to do these things, *Ezek. 36. 37.*) and lay thy cold heart to that device of God exprest in the Scriptures, and unto Christ Jesus, who is given for a Covenant to the People, and look to him for life and quickening ; Go and essay to plead that salvation in the way God doth offer it, and to close with, and rest on Christ for it, as if all were in thy power, yet looking to him for the thing, as knowing that it must come from him ; And if thou do so, he who meets these who remember him in his wayes, *Isa. 65. 3.* will not be wanting on his part, and thou shalt not have ground to say, that thou moved towards the thing until thou could do no more for want of strength, and so left it at Gods door : It shall not fail on his part, if thou have a mind for the business : Yea, I may say, if by all thou hast ever heard of that matter, thy heart loveth it, and desireth to be in hands with it, thou hast already performed within thee, so that difficulty is past, before thou wast aware of it.

Object. Many who have closed with Christ Jesus, as is said, are still complaining of their leanness and fruitlessness, which maketh my heart lay the less weight on that duty of believing.

Answer. If you be convinced that it is a duty to believe
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on Christ, as is said, you may not shift it under any pretence. As for these complaints of some who have looked after him, not admitting every one to be judge of his own fruit. I say, 1. Many by their jealousies of Gods love, and by their mis-belief (after they have so closed with God) do obstruct many precious communications, which otherwise would be let out to them, *Mat.* 13. 58. 2. It cannot be, that any whose heart is gone out after Christ, have found him a wilderness 2. 31. surely they find somewhat in their spirit, swaying them towards God in these two great things, (*viz.*) how to be found in him in that day, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. and how to be forthcoming to his praise in the Land of the Living, *Psal.* 119. 17. and 56. 13. they find these two things aloft in the soul, and that is much; Moreover, they shall after search, if they judge aright, find ever since an emptiness in the Creatures, which abundance of the Creature cannot fill up, all is vanity; Only God can fill the empty room in their heart, and when he but breatheth a little, there is no room for additional comfort from creatures; This saith, that God hath captivated the man, and hath fixed that saving principle in the understanding and heart, who is God but the Lord? *Worship him all ye Gods*, *Psal.* 97. 7. Yea, further, these whose heart hath closed with God in Christ, as is said, will not deny that there have been seasonable preventings and quickenings now and then, when the soul was like to fail, *Psal.* 21. 3. & 94. 18, 19. therefore, let none say, that there is no fruit following, and let none shift their duty upon the unjust and groundless complaints of others.

Object. *Although I judge it my duty to close with Gods device in the Covenant, I am in the dark how to manage that duty, for sometimes God doth offer to be our God without any mention of Christ, and sometimes saith, that he will be troth us unto him; And in other places of Scripture, we*

are called to come to Christ, and he is the Bridegroom. Again, God sometimes speaketh of himself as a Father to men, sometimes as a Husband; Christ is sometimes called the Husband, and sometimes a Brother, which relations seem inconsistent, and do much put me in the dark how to apprehend God when my heart would agree with him, and close with him.

Ans. It may be very well said, that men do come to God, or close with him, and yet they come to Christ and close with him. They may be said to come under a marriage relation unto God; and unto Christ also, who is Husband, Father, Brother, &c. to them, and there is no such mystery here as some do conceive. For the better understanding of it, consider these few things, 1. Although God made man perfect at the beginning, and put him in some capacity of transacting with him immediately, *Eccles. 7. 29. Gen. 2. 16, 17.* yet man, by his fall, did put himself at a perfect distance from God, and in an utter incapacity to bargain or deal any more with him immediately. 2. The Lord did, after *Adams* fall, make manifest the new covenant, in which he did signify that he was content to transact with man again, in and through a Mediatour; and so did appoint men to come to him through Christ. *Heb. 7. 25.* and to look for acceptation only in him, *Ephes. 1. 6.* ordaining men to hear Christ, He being the only party, in whom God was well pleased, *Mat. 17. 5.* 3. This matter is so clear, and supposed to be so notorious in Scripture, and so manifest to all who are under the Ordinances, that the Lord doth often speak of transacting with himself, not making mention of the Mediator, because it is supposed, that every one in the Church knoweth that now there is no dealing with God, except by and through Christ Jesus the Mediator. 4. Consider, that Christ Jesus, God-man, is not only a fit meeting-place for God and men to meet into, and a fit spokes-man to treat between the parties now at variance,

ance, 2, *Cor.* 5. 19. But we may say also he is, the immediate Bridegroom, and so our closing or transacting with God, may be justly called the marriage of the Kings Son; and the elect may be called the *Lambs Wife*, Christ Jesus being, as it were the hand which God holdeth out unto men, and on which they lay hold when they deal with God. And so through and by Christ, we close with God, as our God, on whom our soul doth terminate lastly and ultimately through Christ, 1 *Pet.* 1. 21. 3. Consider that the diverse relations mentioned in Scripture, are set down, to signifie the sure and indissoluble union and communion between God and his people: whatsoever nearness is between head and members, root and branches, King and Subject, shepherd and flock, father and children, brother and sister, Husband and Wife, &c. all is here, *John* 17. 21. to 27. So that whatsoever be spoken in the Scripture, people may be clear, that God calleth them to be reconciled unto him through Christ, and doth offer himself to be their God and Husband in him alone, and men are to accept God to be their God in Christ, pleasing that way of relief for poor man, and to give up themselves unto God in Christ, in whom alone they can be accepted. And they who close with Christ, they do close with God in him, who is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. *Joh.* 14. 9. to 12. And we are not to dip further into the diverse relations mentioned in Scripture, between God or Christ, and men, then as they may point out union and communion, or nearness with God through Christ Jesus, and our advantage thereby.

These things being clear we will not multiply words: But since to believe on Christ is the great duty, required of all that hear this Gospel, we beseech every one, in the Lords Name, to whom the report of this shall come, that without delay they take to heart their lost condition in themselves,

themselves, and that they lay to heart relief which God hath provided by Jesus Christ, whereof he hath made a free offer unto all who will be content of the same, and to be saved that way. And that they lay to heart, that there is no other way of escape from the wrath that is to come (because of which men would be glad at the last day; to run into a lake of melted Lead to be hid from the face of the Lamb, whom they do here despise) we say, we beseech all in the consideration of these things, to work up their hearts to this business, and to lay themselves open for God, and to receive him through Christ in the offers of the Gospel, acquiescing in him, as the only desirable and satisfying good, that so they may secure themselves; go speedily and search for his offers of peace and salvation in the Scripture, and work up your heart and soul to close with them, and with Christ in them, and with God in Christ: And do it so, as you may have this to say, that you were serious, and in earnest, and cordial here, as ever you were in any thing to your apprehension, and for ought you know, Christ is the choice of your heart, at least, you neither know nor allow any thing to the contrary: Whereupon your heart doth appeal unto God to search and try if there be ought amiss, to rectifie it, and lead unto the right way. Now this cleaving of the heart unto him, and casting it self upon him, to be saved in his way, is believing, which doth indeed secure a man from the wrath that is to come, because now he hath received Christ, and believeth on him, and so shall not enter into condemnation, as saith the Scripture.

Object. When I hear what it is to believe on Christ Jesus, I think sometimes I have faith: For I dare say, to my apprehension, the invention of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, pleaseth me, my heart goeth out after him, and doth determinate upon him as a satisfying treasure; and I am glad to accept God to be my God in him. But I often do question

question if ever I have done so, and so am for most part kept hesitating and doubting if I do believe, or be savingly in Covenant with God.

*Express
transacting
with God.*

Ans. It is ordinary for many whose hearts are gone out after Christ in the Gospel, and have received him, to bring the same in question again. Therefore I shall advise one thing as a notable help to fix the soul, in the maintaining faith and an interest in God; and that is, that men not only close heartily with God in Christ, as is said, but also, they *expressly, explicitly, by word of mouth and viva voce; And formally close with Christ Jesus, and accept Gods offer of salvation through him, and so make a Covenant with God.* And this, by Gods blessing may contribute not a little for establishing them about their saving interest in God.

Before I speak directly to this express Covenanting with God, I premise these few things. 1. I do not here intend a covenanting with God, essentially differing from the Covenant between God and the visible Church, as the Lord doth hold it out in his revealed Will. Neither do I intend a Covenant, differing essentially from that transacting of the heart with God in Christ, formerly spoken unto: It is that same Covenant, only it differeth by a singular circumstance, *viz. the formal expression* of the thing which the heart did before practise. 2. I grant this express covenanting and transacting with God, is not absolutely necessary for a mans salvation: For, if any person close heartily and sincerely with God, offering himself in Christ in the Gospel, his soul and state is thereby secured, according to the Scripture, although he utter not words with his mouth: But this express verbal covenanting with God is very expedient, for the better being of a mans state, and his more comfortable maintaining of an interest in Christ Jesus. 3. This express covenant-

ing with God is very expedient, for the better being of a mans state, and his more comfortable maintaining of an interest in Christ Jesus. 3. This expresse covenanting with God by word of mouth, is of no worth, without sincere heart-closing with God in Christ joyned with it: For, without that, it is but a prophaning of the Lords Name, and a mocking of him to his face, so to draw near unto him with the lips, whilst the heart is far away from him. 5. I grant, both cordial and verbal transacting with God will not make out a mans gracious estate unto him, so as to put and keep it above controversy, without joynt witness of the Spirit, by which we know what is freely given unto us of God; yet this explicate way of transacting with God, joyned with that heart-closing with him in Christ, contributes much for clearing up unto a man, that there is a fixed bargain between God and him, and will do much to ward off him many groundless jealousies and objections of an unstable mind and heart, which useth affrontedly to deny this hour, what it did really act and perform the former hour: This explicate covenanting, is an *Instrument* taken of what past between God and the soul, and so hath its own vantage for strengthening of Faith.

As for this expresse covenant, we shall 1. Shew that it is a very warrantable practice. 2. We shall shew shortly what is preparatorily required of those who do so transact with God, 3. How men shall go about that duty. 4. What should follow thereupon.

As to the *first*, I say, it is a *warrantable* practice, and an incumbent duty, expressly and by word to covenant with God, which appeareth thus.

1. In many places of Scripture (if we look to what they may bear according to their scope and the analogy of Faith) *God hath commanded it*, and left it on people as a duty, *Isa. 44. 5. One shall say, I am the Lords,*

Isa. 45. 24. Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength, Jer. 31. 4. Wilt thou cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth, Zech. 13. 9. They shall say, The Lord is my God, Hos. 2. 16. Thou shalt call me Iſhi, and in many places elsewhere. Now since God hath so clearly left it on men in the matter of the word, they may be perswaded, that it is a practice warranted and allowed by him, and well-pleasing unto him.

2. *Arg.* It is the approved practice of the Saints in Scripture, thus expressly to covenant with God, and they have found much quiet in that duty afterwards. David did often expressly say unto God, that he was his God, his portion, and that himself was his servant. Thomas will put his interest out of question with it, Job. 20. 28. Yea, I say, the Saints are much quieted in remembrance of what hath past that way between God and them, Psal. 73. 25. Psal. 142. 5. we find it often in the Book of the Canticles. Now shall the chief Worthies of God be so much in a duty, breeding so much quiet and satisfaction to them in many cases, and shall we be under the New Testament, unto whom access is ministred abundantly and who partake of the sap of the Olive; shall we (I say) lie behind in this approved piece of freedom with God? Since we study to imitate that cloud of witnesses in other things (as faith, zeal, patience, &c.) let us all imitate them in this.

3. *Arg.* The thing about which we move here is a matter of the greatest concernment to all the World: It is the life of our Soul, Deut. 32. 47. Oh shall men study to be express, explicate, plain and peremptory in all their other great businesses, because they are such, and shall they not much more be peremptory and express in this, which doth most concern them? I wonder that many not only do not speak it with their mouth, but that they

do not swear, and subscribe it with their hand, and do not every thing for securing of God to themselves in Christ; and themselves unto God, which the Scripture doth warrant, *Isa. 44. 5.*

This also may have its own weight, as an argument to press this way of covenanting with God. *The business of interest in Christ, and of real and honest transacting with him, is a thing, which in experience of Saints, is most frequently brought upon debate, and in question.* Therefore men had need, all the ways they can, even by thought, word, and deed, to put it to a point.

This also may have place here for pressing this as a duty, *that God is so formal, express, distinct and legal, (to say so) in all the business of mans salvation, viz. Christ must be a near kinsman, to whom the right of redemption doth belong; he must be chosen, called, authorized and sent, Covenants formally draw between the Father and him, the Father accepting payment and satisfaction, giving formal discharges, all done clearly and expressly.* Shall the Lord be so express, plain and peremptory in every part of the business, and shall our part of it rest in a *confused thought*, and we be as dumb beasts before him? If it were a marriage between man and wife, it would not be judged enough, although there were consent in heart given by the woman, and known to the man, if she did never express so much by word, being in a capacity to do so. Now this Covenant between God and man, is held out in Scripture as a marriage between man and wife, *Hos. 19. 20. 2 Cor. 2.* The whole Song of *Soloman* speaketh it. The Lord useth similitudes, to signifie unto us what he intends, and surely this is a special requisite in Marriage, that the wife give an express and explicite consent unto the business: The man saith so, *I take thee to be my lawful wife, and do oblige my self to be a dutiful husband:* The woman is obliged on the other

Part, to expresse her consent, and to say, *Even so I take thee to be my lawful husband, and do promise duty and subjection*: It is so here; The Lord saith, *I betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt call me Ishi, my husband*, Hosea 2. *I will be for thee as a head and husband if thou wilt not be for another*, Hosea 3. the man ought to answer, and say, *Amen, So be it, Thou shalt be my God, my head, and Lord, and I shall and will be thine, and not for another*, Cant. 6. 3. And so this making of this Covenant with God, is called, *a giving of the hand to him*, as the word is, 2 Chron. 30. 8. which doth hint a very expresse, formal, explicate and positive bargaining with God. So then, we conclude it to be an incumbent duty, and a very approved practice, necessary for the quieting of a mans mind, and his more comfortable being in Covenant with God, and more fully answering Gods condescendence and offer in that great and primary promise. *I will be your God, and ye shall be my people*.

Not only *may*, and *should*, people thus expressly close with God in Christ for fixing their heart; but they may, upon some occasions, renew this verbal transacting with God; especially, when through tentations they are made to question if ever they have really and sincerely closed Covenant with God, as they are to put out new acts of faith, embracing Christ as the desirable portion and measure, and also upon other occasions, so were it *expedient*, especially if there remain any doubt about the thing, that by *viva voce* and expresse word, they determine that controversy, and say of the Lord and to him, that he is their refuge and portion, Psalm 91. 2. Psalm 142. We find the Saints doing so; and we may imitate them, especially, 1. In the time of great back-sliding, people were wont to renew the Covenant with God, and we should do so also; Our heart should go after Christ, in the promises of reconciliation with God, for he is our peace
upon

upon all occasions, and our Advocate, and we are bound to apprehend him so when we transgress, 1 *Joh.* 2. 1. and to express so much by word as Saints did in their formal renewing of the Covenant. 2. When people are in hazard, then it were good that they should send out their heart after him, and express their adhering unto him, for securing their own heart; We find *Joskua* doing so, when he was to settle in the land of *Canaan*, in the midst of snares, *Joskua* 24. so *David* doth in his straits, *Psal.* 57. 1. 3. When men apprehend God to be at a distance from them, and their Soul be under withering and decay, then it is safest heartily to close with Christ, and embrace him by faith for securing of the Soul, and it were good to put it out of question, by the expressing of the thing; This is the ready way to draw sap from Christ the root, for recovering of the Soul, and for establishing the heart before him. The Spouse in the Song of *Solomon* doth so, thus asserting her interest in him, when in such a condition; Professing and avouching him to be her beloved, *Cant.* 5. 4. At the celebration of the Lords Supper, men should thus cordially close with God in Christ, and speak and express so much; For, that is a feast of Love; And then, and there we come under a solemn profession of closing with God in Christ, personally and openly, and do receive the seal of it: it is therefore befitting, at that time, to bring up both heart and tongue to second and answer our profession, apprehending God to be our God, and resigning over our selves to be his, and at his disposing. We shall not confine the Lords people to times and season of this duty; The Lord may bind it upon them at his pleasure; Only there is hazzard, that by too frequent express covenanting with God, men turn too formal in it; Therefore, it is not so fit that people should cordially at full length renew that explicate transacting with God, but rather to declare unto God, that

they *adhere* unto the Covenant made with him, and that they do maintain and will never revoke nor recal the same; and withal, they may hint the sum of it, in laying claim unto God in Christ, as their own God; and this they may do often, even in all their addressses to God, and probably this is the thing designed by the Saints in their so ordinary practice in the Scripture, whilst they assert their interest in God, as their God and portion; And it is fit that men in all their walk, hold their heart at the business, by heart-cleaving to God in Christ, *The life we live in the flesh, should be by faith in the Son of God, Gal. 2. 20.*

As to the *second* thing, *viz.* what is preparatorily required of him who is expressly to transact with God: Here besides what we spake before as previous to a mans closing with Christ Jesus, we only add, 1. That he that would explicitly bargain with God, must know, that to do so, is warranted and allowed by God, as we shewed before: If this be wanting, a man cannot do it in faith, and so it will be sin unto him, *Rom. 14. 23.* 2. The man must labour to bring up his heart to the thing, that it do not belye the tongue; It will be a great mocking of God, so to draw near him with the lips, whilst the heart is far off from him, *Isa. 29. 13.*

The *third* thing to be considered in this expresse verbal covenanting with God, is the way how it is to be performed and managed; And beside what was said before in heart-closing with Christ; I add here.

1. The man should do it *confidently*, not only believing that he is about his duty when he doth it; But also, that God in Christ Jesus will accept his poor imperfect way of doing this duty, he do accept a man according to what he hath, if there be a willing mind, *2 Cor. 8. 12.* a mite is accepted, since it is all the poor womans substance, *Mat. 12. 44.* yea if it can be attained, the man should

should believe that the issue and consequence of this transacting shall prove comfortable, and all shall be well, and that God, who engageth for all in the Covenant (since he hath determined the man to this happy choice) will in some measure make him forth-coming, and will perfect what concerns him; *Faithful is he who hath promised, who will also do it*, 1. *Thess.* 5. 24. If this confidence be wanting, the matter will be done with much fear and jealousy, if not worse, and will still prove a disquieting business to the man.

2. It should be done *holily*: It is called the *Holy Covenant*, Luke 1. 72. *The holy things of David*, Acts 13. 34. Here it were fitting, that what is done in this express transacting with God, should not be done passingly, and on the by, but in some special addresses unto God: the thing should be spoken *unto the Lord*, *Psal.* 142. 5. It is beleeving in so great a business that a piece of time were set apart for confessing and supplication before God: yea, also the person so transacting with God, should labour to have high apprehensions of Gods greatness and soveraignty, 2. *Sam.* 7. 22. although he thus humble himself to behold things in Heaven and Earth, and these high and holy thoughts of him, will and should be attended with debasing and humbling thoughts of *self*, although admitted to this high dignity, 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. It is no small thing to be allyed unto, and with the great God of Heaven, and his Son Christ, as *David* speaketh when King *Saul* did offer his Daughter unto him, 1 *Sam.* 18. 22. Yea, further, there should be special guarding and watching, that the heart keep spiritual transacting with God; there is great reason for this holy way of performing the duty; For, men are ready to forget themselves, and to shape the Lord according to their own fancy, and to turn carnal in the business, since it is a marriage transactoin held out in all the ordinary expressions of love,

as in the Song of Solomon, *Isa. 62. 5. Zeph. 3. 17.*

The *fourth* thing we shall speak a word unto, is, what should follow upon this expresse verbal Covenanting with God; I say, beside that union and communion with God in Christ, following upon believing, if a man explicitly by word transact with God, 1. He should thenceforth be singularly careful to abide close by God in all manner of conversations; For if a man thenceforth do any thing unsuitable, he doth falsifie his word before God, which will stick much in his Conscience, and prove a snare; If a man henceforth forget God, and take on him to dispose of himself, since he is not his own, and hath opened his mouth unto the Lord, he makes enquiry after vows, and devoureth that which is holy, *Prov. 20. 25.* 2. He who transacteth with God, should hold stedfast that determination and conclusion; it is a shame for a man, whose heart hath closed with God, and whose mouth hath ratified and confirmed it solemnly before him, to contradict himself again, and to admit any thing to the contrary, he ought boldly to maintain the thing against all deadly.

Then let me beseech you who desire to be established in the matter of your interest in God, that with all conveniency you set apart a piece of time for Prayer before God, and labouring to work up your heart to seriousness, affection, and the faith of the duty, to make a Covenant, and to transact with God by expresse words after this manner:

O Lord, I am a lost and broken Creature by Nature, and by innumerable actual transgressions which I do confess particularly before thee this day; And although, being born within the visible Christ, I was from the womb in Covenant with thee, and had the same sealed unto me in baptism; Yet for a long time I have lived without God in the world,

world, senseless and ignorant of my Obligation, by virtue of that Covenant. Thou hast (at length) discovered unto me, and bound upon my heart, my miserable state in my self, and hast made manifest unto my heart the satisfying relief thou hast provided by Christ Jesus, offering the same freely unto me, upon condition that I would accept of the same, and would close with thee as my God in Christ, warranting and commanding me upon my utmost peril, to accept of this offer, and to flee unto Christ Jesus: Yea, to my apprehension, now thou hast Sovereignly determined my heart, and shaped it for Christ Jesus, leading it out after him in the offer of the Gospel, causing me to approach unto the living God, to close so with him, and to acquiesce in his offer, without any known guile; And that I may come up to that establishment of Spirit in this matter, which should be to my comfort, and the praise of thy glorious Grace; Therefore, I am here this day to put this matter out of question, by express words before thee, according to thy will: And now I, unworthy as I am, do declare, that I believe, that Christ Jesus, who was slain at Jerusalem, was the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World; I do believe that record, that there is life eternal for men in him, and in him only; I do this day in my heart, plead and acquiesce in that device of saving sinners by him, and do interest my soul unto him; I do accept of reconciliation with God through him, and do close with thee as my God in him; I chuse him in all that he is, and all that may follow him, and do resign up my self, and what I am, or have, unto thee, desiring to be divorced from every thing hateful unto thee, and that without exception, or reservation of any thing (consistent with my knowledge) or intended reversion; Here I give the hand to thee, and do take all things about me witnesses, that I, whatever I be, or have hitherto been, do accept of Gods offer of peace through Christ, and do make a sure Covenant with thee this day never to be reversed, hoping

hoping that thou wilt make all things forth-coming, both on thy part and mine, seriously begging (as I desire to be saved) that my corruptions may be subdued, and my Neck brought unto thy sweet yoke in all things, and my heart made chearfully to acquiesce in whatsoever thou dost unto me, or with me, in order to these ends. Now, glory be unto thee, O Father, who devised such a Salvation, and gave the Son to accomplish it; Glory be to Christ Jesus, who at so dear a rate, did purchase the out-letting of that love from the Fathers bosome, and through whom alone this access is granted, and in whom I am reconciled unto God, and honourably united unto him, and am no more an Enemy or Stranger: Glory be to the Holy Ghost, who did alarm me when I was destroying my self: and who did not only convince me of my hazzard, but did also open my eyes to behold the relief provided in Christ; yea, and did perswade and determine my wild heart to fall in love with Christ, as the enriching treasure; and this day doth teach me how to Covenant with God, and how to impropriate to my self all the sure Mercies of David, and blessings of Abraham, and to secure to my self the favour and friendship of God for ever. Now with my soul, heart, head, and whole man; as I can, I do acquiesce in my choice this day, henceforth resolving not to be my own, but thine; And that the care of whatsoever concerns me shall be on thee, as my Head and Lord, protesting humbly that failings on my part, (against which I resolve, thou knowest) shall not make void this Covenant; for so hast thou said, which I intend not to abuse, but so much the more to cleave close unto thee, and I must have liberty to renew, ratifie, and draw extracts of this transaction, as often as shall be found needful. Now I know thy consent to this bargain, stands recorded in Scripture, so as I need no new signification of it; and I, having accepted of thy offer upon thy own terms, will henceforth wait for what is good, and for thy salvation in the end;

end; *As thou art faithful, pardon what is amiss in my way of doing the thing, and accept me in my sweet Lord Jesus, in whom I only desire pardon: And in testimony hereof, I set to my Seal, that God is True, and in declaring him a competent Saviour.*

Let People Covenant with God in fewer or more words, as the Lord shall dispose them; for we intend no Platform of words for any person; Only it were fitting that men should, before the Lord acknowledge their lost state in themselves, and the relief that is by Christ, and that they do declare that they accept of the same, as it is offered in the Gospel, and do thankfully rest satisfied with it, intrusting themselves henceforth wholly unto God to be saved in his way, for which they according to his faithfulness. If men would heartily and sincerely do this, it might heartily through the Lords blessing, help to establish them against many fears and jealousies; And they might date some good thing from this day and hour, which might prove comfortable unto them when they fall in the dark afterwards, and even when many failings do stare them in the face perhaps at the hour of death, 2 Sam. 23. 5. It is much if a man can appeal unto God, and say, Thou knowest there was a day and an hour, when in such a place, I did accept of peace through Christ, and did deliver up my heart to thee, to write on it thy whole Law without exception; heaven and earth are witnesses of it: Remember thy word unto thy Servant, on which thou causedst me to hope.

Object. I dare not adventure to speak such words unto God, because I find not my heart coming up full length in Affection and Seriousness: So, I should but lye unto God, in transacting so with him.

Ans. It is to be regreted that mens heart doth not with much bended sail of Desire and Affection embrace and

and welcome that blessed offer and portion : Yet for answer to the objection, remember, 1. That those to whom the Lord giveth the new heart, forming Christ in them, the whole heart is not renewed ; There is Flesh and Spirit lusting against each other, the one contrary unto the other, so as a man can neither do the good or evil he would do with full bended sail, *Gal. 5. 17.* It is well if there be a good part of the heart going out after Christ, desiring to close with him on his own terms, 2. That there is often a rational love in the heart unto Christ Jesus, expressing it self by a respect to his Commandments. 1. *John 5. 3.* when there is not a sensible prevailing love which maketh the soul sick, *Cant. 2. 5.* Men must not alwayes expect to find this. I say then, although somewhat in your heart draw back, yet if you can say, you are convinced of your broken state without him, you want a righteousness to cover your guilt, and you want strength to stand out against sin, or to do what is pleasing before God : You also see fulness in him in both these respects : You dare say somewhat, within your heart, would be fain at him upon his own terms, and would have both Righteousness for Justification, and strength in order to Sanctification ; and what is within you contradicting this ; is your burden in some measure, and your bondage. If it be so, your heart is brought up to a tolerable length ; Go on to the business, and determine the matter by covenanting with God, and say with your mouth, *that you have both Righteousness and Strength in God, as he hath sworn you shall do, Isa. 45. 24.* It is approved Divinity to say unto God, *I believe*, when much mis-belief is in me, and the heart divided in the case, *Mark 9. 24.* Withal, shew unto God, how matters are in your heart, that so you may be without guile before him ; concealing nothing from him, and put your heart, that is, in his hand to write his Law on it according to the Covenant ;

For that is the thing he seeketh of men, that they deliver up their heart to him, that he may stamp it with his whole Will, without exception; And if you can heartily consent unto that, judging Christs blood a sufficient ransome and satisfaction for Mans Transgression; You may go and expressly strike Covenant with God; for your Heart and Affection is ready engaged.

Object. I dare not so Covenant with God, lest I break to him; Yea, I perswade my self, if such a temptation did offer so and so circumstantiate, I should fall before it, and succumb. Therefore to transact so with God, whilst I foresee such a thing were but to aggradge my condemnation.

Ans. 1. You have already entred Covenant with God, as you are a member of his visible Church; And what is now prest upon you, is, but that you more heartily, sincerely, particularly, and more expressly covenant and transact with him; You are already obliged heartily to close with God in Christ; And, if you do it in heart, I hope the hazzard is no greater by saying that you do so, or have done so. 2. What will you do if you shift hearty transacting with God in Christ, and do not accept his peace, as it is offered? You have not a second of it in the World; Either you must do this, or perish for ever: And if you do it with your heart, you may also say it with your tongue. 3. If people may feare at Covenanting with God, because they will afterwards Transgress, then not one man should Covenant with God; for surely every one will transgress afterwards, if they live any length of time after the transaction; And we know no way like this, to secure men from falling: For if you Covenant honestly with him, engageth, beside the new heart, to put his fear and Law therein; To give his Spirit to cause you to walk in his way: And when you Covenant with God, you deliver up your self unto him, to be sanctified and made conform to his will; It is rather

ther a giving up of your self to be led in his way in all things, and kept from every evil way, than any formal engagement on your part, to keep his way, and to hold off from evil. So that you need not scare at the Covenant, the Language whereof is, *Wilt thou not be made clean?* Jer. 13. 27. And all that shun to strike Covenant with God, do thereby declare, that they desire not to be made clean. 4. As it is hard for any to say confidently, they will transgress, if such a temptation did offer so and so circumstantiate; because men may think, that either God will keep a temptation out of their way, or not *suffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear*, or give to them a way of escape, Psal. 46. 1. 1 Cor. 10. 13. So the question is not, What I may do afterwards, but, what I now resolve to do. If my heart charge me presently with any deceit or resolution to transgress, I must lay aside that deceit before I transact with God: But if my heart charge me with no such purpose; yea, I dare say, I resolve against every transgression; And although I think I shall fall before such and such a temptation, yet that thought floweth not from any allowed, and approved resolution to do so; But from knowledge of my own corruption, and of what I have done to provoke God to desert me. But the Lord knows, I resolve not to Transgress, nor do I approve any secret inclination of my heart to such a sin, but would reckon it my singular mercy to be kept from sin in such a case; And I judge my self a wretched man, because of such a bobby of death within me, which doth threaten to make me transgress. In that case, I say, my heart doth not condemn me, *therefore I may, and ought to have confidence before God*, 1 Feb. 3. 21. If this be the case, I say to thee, although thou shouldst afterwards fail many wayes, and so perhaps draw upon thy self sad temporal strokes thereby, *And lose for a season many expressions of his Love,*
yet

yet there is an *Advocate* with the Father to plead thy pardon, 1 *John* 2. 1. Who hath satisfied for our breaches, *Isa.* 53. 5, 6. and for his sake, God resolveth to hold fast the Covenant with men after their transgression, *Psal.* 89. 30. 37. else how could he be said to betroth us to himself for ever, *Hos.* 2. 19, 20. and how could the Covenant be called *Everlasting*, ordered in all things and sure, if there were not ground of comfort in it, even when our house is not so and so with God; 2 *Sam.* 23. 25. Yea, it were no better than the Covenant of Works, if those who enter it with God, could so depart from him again, as to make it void unto themselves, and to put themselves into a worse condition than they were in before they made it, *Fer.* 32. 40. compared with *Heb.* 8. 6. The Lord hateth putting away, *Mal.* 2. 16. No honest heart will stumble on this, but will rather be strengthened thereby in duty, *Hos.* 14. 9. For other ties and bonds, beside divorce, and punishment by death, do oblige the ingenuous wife unto duty. So here men will fear the Lord and his Goodness, *Hos.* 3. 5.

Object. I have at the celebration of the Lords Supper, and at some other occasions, covenanted expressly and verbally with God, but my barrenness in his ways, and the renewed jealousies of my gracious state, maketh me question if ever I transacted with God in sincerity, and I think I can do it no other wayes than I have done it.

Ans. 1. Men are not to expect fruitfulness according to their desire, nor full assurance of Gods Favour, immediately after they have fled unto Christ, and expressly transacted with God in him. These things will keep a man on work all his dayes. The Saints had their failings and short-comings, yea, and back-slidings, with many fits of dangerous mis-belief, after they had very seriously, and sincerely, and expressly closed with God, as their God in Christ. 2. Many do look for faithfulness in their

their walk and establishment of faith, from their own sincerity in transacting with God, rather than from the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. They fix their heart in their own honesty and resolutions, and not in the Blessed Root Christ Jesus, without whom we can do nothing, and are vanity altogether in our best estate. Men should remember, that one piece of grace cannot produce any degree of grace; Further, nothing can work grace but the arm of Jehovah: And if men would lean unto Christ, and covenant with him as their duty absolutely, whatsoever may be the consequence, at least, looking only to him for the suitable fruit, it should be far better with them: God pleaseth not that men should betake themselves unto Christ, and covenant with him for a season until they see if such and such fruit and establishment shall follow, purposing to disclaim their interest in him, and the Covenant, if such and such fruit doth not appear within such a length of time. This is to put the wayes of God to tryal, and is very displeasing unto him. Men must absolutely close with Christ, and covenant with him, resolving to maintain these things as their duty, and a ready way to reach fruit, whatsoever shall follow thereupon, they having a testimony within them, that they seriously design conformity to his revealed will in all things; And they that have closed Covenant with him for the same end, as well as to be saved thereby. 3. Men should be sparing to bring in question their sincerity in transacting with God, unless they can prove the same, or have great presumptions for it. If you can prove any deceit or guile in your transacting with him, you are obliged to disclaim and rectifie it, and to transact with God honestly, and without guile: But if you know nothing of your deceit or guile, in the day you did transact with him; Yea, you can say, that you did appeal unto God in that day, that you dealt honestly with him, and intended not

to deceive: and, did obtest him according to his faithfulness, to search and try if there was any crookedness in your way, and to discover it unto you, and heal it, *Psal.* 139. 23, 24. and afterwards you came to the Light; that your deeds might be manifest, *John* 3. 20, 21. and you can say, that Gods answers from his Word to you, in so far as you could understand, were answers of peace, and confirmations of your sincerity; Yea, further, you dare say, that if upon life and death, you were again to transact with him, you can do it no other way, nor intending more sincerity and seriousness than before: Then I dare say unto thee in the Lords name, thou oughtest not to question thy sincerity in transacting with God, but to have confidence before God, since thy heart doth not condemn thee, *1 John* 3. 21. and thou art bound to believe that God dealeth uprightly with the upright man, *and with the pure doth shew himself pure, Psal.* 18. 25, 26. If a man intend honestly, God will not suffer him to beguile himself, yea, the Lord suffereth no man to deceive himself, unless the man intend to deceive both God and Men. 4. Therefore, impute your unfruitfulness to your unwatchfulness, and your mis-belief; And impute your want of full assurance, unto an evil heart of unbelief, helped by Satan to act against the glorious free grace of God; And charge not these things upon want of sincerity in your closing with Christ; And resolve henceforth to abide close by the root, and you shall bring forth more Fruit; And by much Fruit you lay your self open to the witness of Gods Spirit, which will testify with your Spirit, that you have sincerely and honestly closed with God, and that the rest of your works are wrought in God, and approved of him; and so the witness of the Spirit and the Water, joyning with the blood, whereupon you are to lay the weight of your Soul and Conscience; And where alone you are to sink the curses of the Law, due

unto you for all your sins and failings in your best things. These three do agree in one; *viz.* That this is the way of life, and peace, and that you have interest therein, and so you come to quietness and full assurance, *John* 15. 4, 5. and 14. 21, 23. *Rom.* 8. 16. 1 *John* 5. 1.

O blessed bargain of the New Covenant, and thrice blessed Mediator of the same! Let him ride prosperously, and subdue Nations and Languages, and gather in all his Jewels, that honourable company of the first-born, and stately troop of Kings and Priests, whose glory it shall be to have washed their garments in the blood of that spotless Lamb; and whose happiness shall continually flourish in following him whithersoever he goeth; And in being in the immediate company of the Ancient of dayes, one sight of whose face shall make them in a manner forget that ever they were on the Earth. O if I could perswade men to believe, that these things are not yea and nay, and to make haste towards him, who hasteth to judge the World, and to call men to an account, especially about the improvement of this Gospel! *Even so, come Lord Jesus.*

The whole Treatise resumed in a few *Questions and Answers.*

Quest.

W*hat is the great business a man hath to do in the World?*

Answ. To make sure a Saving Interest in Christ Jesus, and to walk suitably thereunto.

Quest. 2. *Have not all the members of the visible Church a Saving Interest in Christ?*

Answ. No verily; yea, but a very few of them have it.

Quest. 3. *How shall I know, if I have a Saving Interest in him?*

Answ. Ordinarily the Lord prepareth his own way in the Soul, by a work of Humiliation, and discovereth a mans sin and misery to him, and exerciseth him so therewith, that he longs for the Physitian Christ Jesus.

Quest. 4. *How shall I know, if I have got a competent discovery of my sin and misery?*

Answ. A competent sight of it, maketh a man take Salvation to heart above any thing in this World: It maketh him disclaim all relief in himself, even in his best things: It maketh Christ, who is the Redeemer, very precious to the soul: It maketh a man stand in awe to sin afterwards; Maketh him content to be saved upon any terms God pleaseth.

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Quest. 5

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Quest. 5. What other way may I discern a Saving Interest in him ?

Ans. By the going out of my heart seriously and affectionately towards him, as he is held out in the Gospel; And this is faith, or believing.

Quest. 6. How shall I know if my heart goeth out after him aright, and that my faith is true Saving Faith ?

Ans. Where the heart goeth out aright after him, in true and saving Faith, the soul pleaseth Christ alone above all things, and pleaseth him in all his three Offices, to rule and instruct, as well as to save; And is content to cleave unto him, whatsoever inconvenience may follow.

Quest. 7. What other mark of a Saving Interest in Christ can you give to me ?

Ans. He that is in Christ savingly, is a new Creature, he is graciously changed and renewed in some measure, in the whole man, and in all his wayes; pointing towards all the known commands of God.

Quest. 8. What if I find sin now and then prevailing over me ?

Ans. Although every sin deserveth everlasting vengeance; Yet if you be afflicted for your failings, confess them with shame of face unto God, resolving to strive against them honestly henceforth, and flee unto Christ for pardon, you obtain mercy, and your interest stands sure.

Quest. 9. What shall the man do who cannot lay claim to Christ Jesus, nor any of these marks spoken of ?

Ans. Let him not take rest, until he make sure unto himself a Saving Interest in Christ.

Quest. 10. What way can a man make sure an interest in Christ, who never had a saving interest in him hitherto ?

Ans. He must take his sins to heart, and his great hazzard thereby, and he must take to heart Gods offer of pardon, and peace through Christ Jesus, and heartily close with Gods offer, by betaking himself unto Christ,
the

the blessed refuge.

Quest. 11. *What if my sins be singularly heinous, and great, beyond ordinary?*

Ans. Whatsoever thy sins be, if thou wilt close with Christ Jesus by faith, thou shalt never enter into condemnation.

Quest. 12. *Is faith in Christ only required of me?*

Ans. Faith is the only condition, upon which God doth offer peace and pardon unto men: But be assured, Faith, if it be true and saving, will not be alone in the Soul, but will be attended with true repentance, and a thankful study of conformity to Gods Image.

Quest. 13. *How shall I be sure that my heart doth accept of Gods Offer, and doth close with Christ Jesus?*

Ans. Go make a Covenant expressly, and by word speak the thing unto God.

Quest. 14. *What way shall I do that?*

Ans. Set apart some bit of time, and having considered your own lost estate, and the relief offered by Christ Jesus, work up your heart to please and close with that offer, and say unto God expressly, that you do accept of that offer, and of him to be your God in Christ; and do give up your self to him to be saved in his way, without reservation or exception in any case; and that you henceforth will wait for salvation in the way he hath appointed.

Quest. 15. *What if I break unto God afterwards?*

Ans. You must resolve on his strength not to break, and watch over your own way, and put your heart in his hands to keep it: And if you break, you must confess it unto God, and judge your self for it, and flee to the Advocate for pardon, and resolve to do no more so: and this you must do as often as you fail.

Quest. 16. *How shall I come to full assurance of my interest in Christ, so as it may be above controversie?*

Ans. Learn to lay your weight upon the blood of Christ,

Christ, and study purity and holiness in all manner of conversation, and pray for the witness of Gods Spirit to joyn with the blood and the water ; and his Testimony added unto these, will establish you in the faith of, and Interest in Christ.

Quest. 17. *What is the consequence of such closing with God in Christ by heart and mouth ?*

Ans. Union and communion with God ; All good here and his blessed fellowship in Heaven for ever afterwards.

Quest. 18. *What if I slight all these things and not lay them to heart to put them in practice ?*

Ans. The Lord cometh with his Angels in flaming fire; to render vengeance to them who obey not this Gospel ; And thy judgment shall be greater than the judgment of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* ; and so much the greater that thou hast read this Treatise : for, it shall be a witness against thee in that day.

F I N I S.

A Catalogue of Books Printed for and sold by
Dorman Newman, at the Sign of the Kings Arms
 in the *Poultry*.

Choice and Practical Expositions on the Ten Commandments preached by *James Durham* late Minister in *Glasgow*.

A Golden Key to open hidden Treasure, or several great points, which refer to the Saints present blessedness, and their future happiness ; With the resolution of several Important questions, the Active, and Passive obedience

dience of Christ, Vindicated and Improved; two serious, and singular pleas which all sincere Christians may safely make to all those ten Scriptures which speak of the General, and particular Judgment that must certainly pass on all &c. The 1st. and 2^d. part by *Tho. Brooks* late preacher of the Gospel at St. *Margaret new Fish-street*.

A Collection of Sermons preached at the Morning Lecture in *Southwark* and else-where, By *Nicholas Blakie*.

The Morning seeker, shewing the benefit of being good betimes, with directions to make sure work about early Religion, by *John Ryiber*.

The Interest of Reason in Religion with the Import and use of Scripture Metaphors and the matter of union, between Christ and believers with reflections on several late writings, especially, Mr. *Sherlocks* discourse, concerning the knowledge of Christ modestly enquired into and stated, by *James Ferguson*,

The Works of Mr. *James Fanerway* containing these six following Treatises, Heaven upon Earth, or the best friend in the worst of times; Death unstung, A Sermon preached at the Funeral of *Tho. Mosely* an Apothecary, with a Narrative of his life and death, also the manner of Gods dealing with him before and after his conversion; A Sermon preached at the Funeral of *Tho. Savage*: Invisible realities demonstrated in the Holy life and Triumphant death of Mr. *John Fanerway*; His Legacy to his friends containing 27 famous Instances of Gods providences in, and about Sea dangers and deliverances, with a Sermon on that subject.

Life in Gods favour, a seasonable discourse in Death-threatening times, being the substance of Sundry Sermons, on *Psalms*. 30. 5. *In his favour is life*, By *O. Haywood* Minister of the Gospel.

A call to prayer in two Sermons on that subject lately preached to a Country Auditory, with an account of the Principles

Principles and Practices of the *Quakers* in matter of prayer subjoyned, wherein is shewed that the *Quakers* religion is much wanting in prayer, and they themselves grossly guilty in not calling upon God, and of Fathering much impiety on the Spirit of God, alleadging him in defence of their prayer-less cause.

Quakerism Subverted being a further discovery and confutation of the Gross Errours of the *Quakers*, Published and maintained by *Will. Penn* and others of that sect.

A warning to Souls to beware of *Quakers* and *Quakerism*, by occasion of a late dispute at *Early* in *Cheshire*, all three written by *John Cheyney* Minister of the Gospel.

Gospel remission, or a Treatise shewing that true blessedness consists in Pardon of sin, wherein is discovered the many gospel-Mysteries therein contained, the glorious effects proceeding from it, great mistakes made about it, the true Signs and Symptoms of it; Way and means to obtain it; by *Jeremiah Burrough*.

A Protestants resolution, shewing his reasons why he will not be a Papist, digested into so plain a method, of Question and answer, that an ordinaay Capacity may be able to defend the Protestant Religion; against the most Cunning Jesuite or popish Priest.

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The triumphs of Gods revenge against the crying and Execrable sin of murther, expressed in 30. several Tragical Histories, to which is added, Gods revenge against the abominable sin of Adultery.

A Token for children, being an exact account of the Conversion; Holy and exemplary lives and joyful deaths of several young Children in 2 parts; by *James Faneway* minister of the Gospel.

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